

The Data Collection Framework

Report of the 15th Liaison Meeting

Meeting between the Chairs of RCGs (and sub-group on Diadromous species), PGECON, STECF meetings on EU-MAP, RDB steering groups, key end users (ICES, STECF, GFCM), JRC and the Commission

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

According to Article 8 of the Regulation (EC) No 2017/1004¹ (Data Collection Framework, DCF), Member States shall cooperate and coordinate their actions to further improve the quality, timeliness and coverage of data enabling the reliability of data collection methods to be further improved, with a view to improving their data collection activities. Further according to article 9 (1) of the same regulation, Member States shall coordinate their data collection activities with other Member States in the same marine region and shall make every effort to coordinate their actions with third countries having sovereignty or jurisdiction over waters in the same marine region.

In order to facilitate regional coordination, regional coordination groups shall be established by the relevant Member States for each marine region (Article 9(2) of the Regulation (EC) No 2017/1004). Six Regional Coordination Groups (RCG) have been established and are operational in the framework of the DCF: Baltic (RCG Baltic), North Sea & Eastern Arctic (RCG NS&EA), North Atlantic (RCG NA), Mediterranean and Black Sea (RCG Med& Black Sea), RCG Large Pelagics (RCG LP) and Long Distance Fisheries (RCG LDF). Most fishing fleets subject to DCF activities are covered by these RCGs. In addition to these RCGs a Planning Group dealing with data collection of economic data issues has been established (PGECON).

The marine regions were defined at the 5th Liaison Meeting as follows:

1. the Baltic Sea (ICES areas III b-d);
2. the North Sea (ICES areas IIIa, IV and VIId), the Eastern Arctic (ICES areas I and II), the ICES divisions Va, XII & XIV and the NAFO areas;
3. the North Atlantic (ICES areas V-X, excluding Va and VIId);
4. the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea (complemented since 2013 with fisheries on Large Pelagics managed by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations on tuna fisheries – ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC, IATTC);

regions where fisheries are operated by Community vessels and managed by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMO) other than tuna RFMOs to which the Community is contracting party or observer (Long-Distance Fisheries).

Regional coordination greatly increases the efficiency, effectiveness and integration of the various DCF National Work Plans (WPs). A RCG consist of experts appointed by Member States, including national correspondents, and the Commission and a meeting is held annually.

According to article 9(6) of the Regulation (EC) 2017/1004 Regional coordination groups shall coordinate with each other and with the Commission, where issues affect several marine regions. In order to create a forum where issues that affect several marine regions can be assessed and discussed a Liaison meeting is organised every year after the RCG meetings have taken place.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (recast)

The participants of the Liaison Meeting (LM) are the chairs of STECF DCF EWGs, the chairs (incoming and outgoing) of the different RCGs, the chair(s) of the PGECON, the core DCF data end-users (e.g. ICES, ICCAT and GFCM), the chairs of the steering groups of Regional Databases and the Commission. Formally, the Liaison meeting is an expert group to assist the Commission on data collection issues.

The 15th Liaison Meeting (LM) was held at the DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), Brussels, from 1st to 2nd October 2018. Mr Joost Paardekooper, DG MARE Head of Unit C3, opened the meeting by welcoming participants and addressed the status of the DCF from the Commission's point of view.

1.2 Terms of Reference

The terms of references for the meeting were the following:

TOR 1. Discussion with end users

- A. Setting the scene (end user role and future legislative developments)
- B. End user needs: presentations from ICES, STECF, RFMOs on needs and RCGs/Liaison role in integrating their needs in data collection; presentations from RCG Chairs on work done so far (subgroup on end user needs) and discussion
- C. Future end user data needs
- D. Data transmission and quality reporting

TOR 2. Data handling

- A. RCG data calls – overview of how MS responded
- B. Overview of use of the Regional Databases for RCGs in 2017-2018 and problems identified
- C. Future developments for Regional Databases
- D. Data calls - main changes in data calls anticipated next year

TOR 3. Discussion on possible follow-up to the main outputs/recommendations of:

- A. discussion with end users
- B. The 2018 RCGs - specific recommendations addressed to the Liaison Meeting
- C. PGECON – outcomes and recommendations from their 2018 meeting(s)
- D. STECF EWG and STECF Plenary - outcomes and recommendations from their 2018 meetings

TOR 4. Governance

- A. Follow-up of RCG RoP adoption in each of the RCGs (RCG Chairs)
- B. Future steps in RCG work. Structure of RCGs (tentative changes in structure i.e. PGECON and in RCG number)
- C. Cooperation between RCGs and PGECON (Liaison role and way forward)

TOR 5. AOB

- A. Requested outcomes of RCGs List of scientific surveys; Table 1A of Work Plan; contributions to EU-MAP revision
- B. Landing obligation (Discuss main issues that came out of the RCGs)
- C. Agree on a list of recommendations relating to DCF (that MS will need to report on in their AR2018). Review and prioritize DCF-related study proposals from RCGs, PGECON, EGs etc. Planning of RCG work for 2019.
- D. List of recommended meetings for 2019 as guidance for MS.
- E. Announcement of new chairs (where relevant), next meeting(s) and venues
- F. Format of report

1.3 Participants

The 15th Liaison Meeting met with the following participants:

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2. Discussion with end-users (ToR 1)

2.1. Setting the scene (ToR 1A)

LM 2018 was the second meeting based on the Data Collection Framework (DCF) Regulation 2017/1004. The first, held in 2017, confirmed the role given to LM, to ensure that Regional coordination groups coordinate with each other and with the Commission, where issues affect several marine regions, according to the article 9(6). Formally, the Liaison meeting is a subgroup of the Commission expert group on data collection issues.

In 2018, for the first time, a one day meeting was dedicated to an exchange with end-users (ToR 1 and 2). GFCM, ICES, STECF and the JRC (in its role of handling the STECF data calls) participated in the meeting, and IOTC sent its relevant information by email. The Commission, through its international unit also presented the information from ICCAT and IOTC.

Given that only one day was left to address common issues across RCGs, the outcomes and report content of the LM has changed from last year. The new approach allows to give more weight to the end-users needs and communication (in line with the DCF), and demands a reformatting of the focus of RCGs recommendations. It was agreed, for each relevant field of the DCF (e.g. governance, quality, RDB, recreational fisheries, diadromous species, socio-economics), to summarize the agreements and recommendations from all RCGs and comment where it is needed, and refer to RCG reports for details. The synthesis of all agreements and recommendations remains in the annex of the LM report. This approach is thought to bring a panoramic view of the RCG contents, and provide an added value to issues affecting several regions.

A reminder was given on the central role of the end-users (as per the definition of users of data collected through the DCF) in the Regulation, confirmed as well by the dedicated day at the LM to this topic. It was acknowledged that the number of end-users was broadening, but that a modification to the data collection in the field was extremely difficult, essentially when seen as breaking historical time series.

2.2. End-user needs, present and future (ToR 1B&C)

2.2.1. ICES presentation

ICES provided a brief presentation of the visions for communicating data needs to the RCGs and LM. ICES' groups identify data needs through expert groups, benchmarks and workshops; these are peer-reviewed and consolidated within the ICES system before being communicated. Developments in terms of setting up data calls and data transmission through the Stock Information Database (SID) facilitating a more streamlined process were presented and linked to the later presentation of the RDBES.

Using SID as a repository for the data needs for each of the stocks was welcomed by the RCG; the prospects of a more automatized set-up of data needs as input to the coming data calls would facilitate updates making it easier to use than the cumbersome spreadsheets. This was seen as a good way forward to more efficient and streamlined data calls. The ability for data providers to access and download upcoming data needs immediately after the working group was appreciated. This will allow the data submitters to get advance access to what will be included in the forth coming data call and also provide the possibility to flag issues e.g. like requesting data that is not collected due to no fishery or quota. A suggestion was to include 'aggregation level' in the drop down menu for data points.

In terms of data transmission failures and their reporting, this pre-screening by data providers will potentially greatly reduce the non-transmission failures, which currently are marked as failures.

In terms of Data Calls, it was discussed that having the expert groups as early as possible to draft the data call text was encouraged and the SID was seen as being useful in having the data needs listed. The big data call on catch and landings, etc., should only be issued once, early in the year, specifying the deadlines for the various groups in the text. This would ensure data providers to only get one data call and get started on compilation of the data at an early stage. Deadlines for data calls should not coincide with National holidays or Weekends; this should be checked prior to issuing.

In terms of prioritizing which data to collect, ICES groups do some of prioritizing based on science and with off-set in what can cover Client needs in term of advice; however, at a more fundamental level, having the EGs to go through a detailed revision of data needs (e.g. use of maturity data) in specified sub-groups was suggested by the RCG. This could – and should – be part of the benchmarks, however, should be carried out already at the stage where the Issue Lists are being created. ICES Secretariat was encouraged to facilitate such exercises also at the EG level.

2.2.2. GFCM presentation

The representative of the GFCM Secretariat (Mr Federico De Rossi, Data Compliance Officer), updated the LM about the current fisheries data needs of the GFCM as identified by existing GFCM recommendations and listed in the data submissions calendar on the GFCM website. He recalled the progress made in the recent years with the adoption of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF), an instrument supporting the implementation of the mid-term strategy (2017–2020) towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries through the identification and collection of fisheries-related data necessary to improve the formulation of sound scientific advice by relevant GFCM subsidiary bodies. Within this context, an important step at Mediterranean and Black Sea level was transposed in the new recommendation GFCM/41/2017/6 on the submission of data on fishing activities in the GFCM area. The recommendation, foreseeing the submission of information needed to assess the status of those stocks considered priority by the GFCM Commission, is to be applied by Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-contracting Parties of the GFCM (CPCs). Finally, the LM was informed about the ongoing GFCM pilot phase on the application of quality indicators (timeliness, completeness, conformity, stability and consistency) to fisheries data as transmitted by all CPCs through the DCRF online platform. The next steps of the pilot study would be the definition of communication procedures by the GFCM Secretariat with relevant CPCs in order to try to overcome potential issues in data quality. The final results of the pilot phase will be reported to the 2019 sessions of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and the Compliance Committee (CoC) to be then possibly submitted to the 43rd session of the GFCM Commission for a final decision about the use of fisheries data quality indicators at GFCM level. This important exercise would be of particular importance towards the improvement of data transmissions by CPCs as well as of the compliance assessment by GFCM for which the feedback of GFCM, as data end user, to EC will benefit.

2.2.3. JRC presentation

JRC presented the upload facility and the stages driving the quality checks of the upload. The possibility of merging FDI and MED&BS data calls in 2019 is being investigated.

2.2.4 COM presentation on tuna-fisheries

Regarding the EU MAP, major shark species are subject to assessment of RFMOs (that relates to table 1C of the EU MAP, and should also be the subject to appropriate sampling (even if they are not in table 1C – stocks in marine regions under RFMOs of the EU MAP).

Recommendation to STECF: Shortfin mako shark and Porbeagle to be included in future table 1C for the tuna RFMOs areas. These are two high priority for RFMOs.

Last year, one of the recommendations from the LM was the establishment of a permanent subgroup for temperate tuna as a complement to the existing, tropical tuna coordinating group in 2018. This group could be an added value for the RFMOs, because some stocks need refinement on changes in the stock distribution.

Moreover, clarification is demanded on the **compatibility** of shark sampling activities with the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora provisions**. There is a need to be very cautious not to exceed our sampling strategies when dealing with vulnerable stocks. This may be a commonplace, but COM's interest is to have a first view of how MS are dealing with this issue, and the question is of course addressed to those directly engaged on sampling strategy definition.

		Mandatory RFMO					Non-Mandatory RFMO				Other	
		Non-DCF					DCF					
		TINC	TACE	FAD data	T2SF	T1 Discards	Matur	Rec	LW	Agex		Stock of origin
ICCAT MED	ALB	LL				B						
		PS	B	B		B						
	BET	LL				B						
		PS				B	P	P				
		TRAP				B						
	SWO	LL				B						
PS					B							
ICCAT ATL	ALB	Trawl				B						
		Ym				B						
		BB				B						
	BET	BB				B						
		TRAP				B						
	SKJ	BB				B	P	B				
		PS				B						
	YFT	LL				B						
		PS				B						
		BB				B						
PS					B							
BET	LL				B	P	B					
	BB				B							
Sharks	LL				B							
	PS				B							
BIL	LL				B							
	PS				B							
SWO	LL				B							
	PS				B							
IOTC	ALB	U-PH										
		PS										
	SKJ	LL										
		PS										
	YFT	PS										
		PS										
	BET	LL										
		PS										
	Sharks	LL										
		PS										
BIL	LL											
	PS											
SWO	LL											
	PS											

available to the RFMO or stock assessment
Partially available
non available
non available & priority (P: Key variable for stock assessment or stocks under Recovery Plan)
B: blank: not a priority for the SC
Not relevant

Above, the table related to identification of the data needs for tuna, tuna-like species and shark fishes in the Atlantic and Mediterranean regulated by ICCAT. The data needs include biological data (maturity, age, and fecundity), length and weights as provided in May 2018 by the Regional Coordination Groups on Large Pelagic. This table is a good example of feedback to data providers, and allows the identification of issues to be addressed on a regional basis, with the objective of improving the quality of scientific advice and managing measures.

Optimization of observer programmes. The tuna RFMOs highlighted the need for European Member States to ensure that the allocation of observer sampling effort is balanced with requirements.

Automatic systems of sampling on board. In complement of the previous point, there is a need to progress on automatic monitoring system using cameras and sensors, and also alternative methods of collecting biological data.

Sampling strategy at tuna farms (aquaculture). In order to allow Standing Committee Research and Statistics to work on regional growth rates in farms, and relate maximum input with maximum capacity, there is a need to develop sampling strategies at tuna farms.

Test the accuracy of counting methodologies when caging tuna; Counting tunas in cages is currently done with video cameras and stereoscopic cameras, but the level of accuracy of those measurements is at stake.

All the points above should be addressed in RCG LPF during the 2019 session.

2.2.5. COM presentation of the revision of the EU-MAP

On the revision of the EU-MAP, COM gave a presentation outlining the main steps of future work: renewal of the current legal framework for a sufficient period after 2019 which would allow for consultation of relevant parties, including RCGs, on a revised EU-MAP. RCGs were requested to work and coordinate between themselves in order to provide the COM with a final input for EU-MAP revision by June 2019. All RCGs and PGECON were requested abide by this date, due to time constraints in organising and adopting the revision. RCGs were requested to integrate as far as possible the input from end users and to contribute the finalisation of the updated list of surveys, which is also an input to the EU-MAP revision.

2.3. Data transmission and quality reporting (ToR 1D)

2.3.1. Confidentiality issue

Confidentiality issue is to be linked to the specificities of the fisheries data and the recent GDPR directive: An initiative of a common text summarising the issues is ongoing and will require feedback from MS in return, in order to be in a position to agree on a procedure in RCG 2019.

Maintaining confidentiality of published personal or sensitive data is not a novel requirement and is common-place in many situations (e.g. economics and statistical agencies) – there is also a body of literature published on the subject. The Liaison Meeting believes it would be best to adopt a simple, clear system that is easy to understand and implement.

The STECF/FDI group is currently considering similar issues and their discussions and solution should be reviewed once published. In the meantime the following rules can be considered. Each unit of confidential data published must contain **at least 3 distinct individuals** - this is a reasonable balance between the public interest in publishing the data and the confidentiality rights of the data subjects. To this end:

- 1) **Data providers should not suppress any data themselves**
- 2) If the data request defines that data should be pre-aggregated (e.g. VMS data aggregated to c-square level) then the data providers should be requested to supply the number of unique “individuals” in each aggregated unit (e.g. the number of distinct vessels per c-square). If the data request asks for data on a detailed level (e.g. individual fishing trips) then this is not necessary
- 3) The data will then be sent to the data requester (e.g. ICES) in a secure manner, and stored in a secure location with restricted access. The authorised end user (e.g. a

working group) will then be given access to the data, and can use it for the agreed purpose. The data should be deleted once this purpose is completed.

- 4) Publication of this data (including maps/charts/tables derived from that data) must use one of the following techniques:

- a. **Suppression**

Suppress any data that does not include **at least 3 different individuals**. Suppression can either be done by suppressing the unit or publishing the unit but suppressing the sensitive values (e.g. effort, value). If suppressing sensitive values then care must be taken to ensure any published totals can't easily be used to infer the suppressed value (e.g. if the value of a single unit is suppressed but the total value is also published then the suppressed value could easily be calculated).

- b. **Aggregation**

Aggregate the data (spatially, temporally or both) such that each aggregation contains **at least 3 different individuals**. After aggregation if there are aggregated units that still contain less than 3 individuals than another level of aggregation can be applied, or those aggregated units should be suppressed.

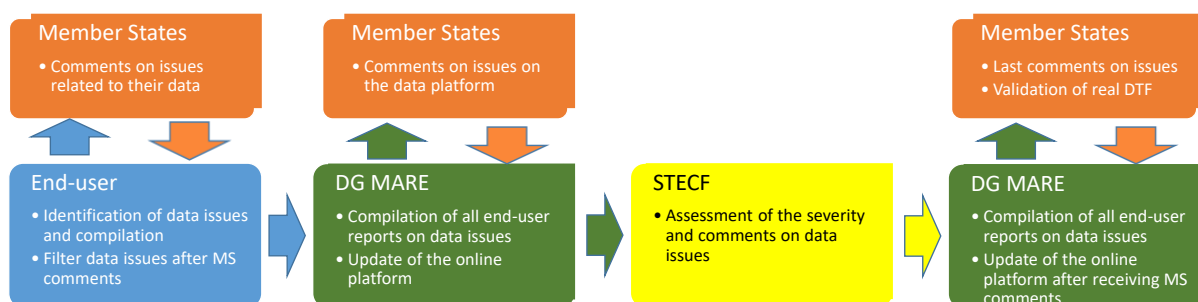
When aggregating data, it is not always possible to simply add up the number of distinct individuals in the underlying data to calculate the number of unique individuals in the aggregated unit – this is the case when the same individuals can be present in a number of the original units. An example would be temporally aggregating VMS data to an annual basis when it was originally supplied on a monthly level – the aggregator will not know whether the same vessel was active for all 12 months, or whether there were 12 different vessels active. In this example the data could also be aggregated by country (assuming that individuals can only have a single country per aggregated unit) such that each annual aggregation must contain data from at least 3 vessels from the same country, or data from at least 3 different countries, or both.

Multiple different aggregations of the same data should also not be published since it might inadvertently reveal the confidential data.

2.3.2. Data transmission issues

COM gave a presentation on the JRC Data Transmission Monitoring Tool, a new online platform developed since 2015 in which collected data transmission failures from end users are uploaded and which serves for STECF evaluation following MS replies to the reported failures. The overall number of reported failures seems to improve year after year although there cannot be a comparison between years due to varying data calls.

The main issue today is the lack of clarity in how the problems are reported by end users, which often leads to a lack of clarity in MS replies and thereafter of STECF evaluation (graphical representation below).



There is need for further guidance to end users on how to report DT failures and for STECF on evaluation to be able to assist the COM in the evaluation of apparent failures and in pursuing the cases which are relevant. As a pilot, the COM will ask STECF to assess DT failures of year 2018 during the EWG 18-18 on evaluation of national work plans and speed up the process. The final COM recommendation was for end users to set up a process of pre-screening of all apparent failures before communicating them to the COM for upload in the Tool, with the aim to clarify directly with the MS and eventually reduce the number of reported DT. A process similar to the ICES process in this respect was called for.

3. RCG data handling (ToR 2)

3.1. RCG data calls and Overview of use of the Regional Databases for RCGs and problems identified (ToR 2A&B)

3.1.1. RCG Baltic

All countries represented in the Baltic Sea region uploaded data on Commercial samplings (CS), Commercial Landing statistics (CL) and Commercial Effort statistics (CE) from 2017 to the Regional Database (RDB) hosted by ICES prior to the deadline 25th June 2018.

The data subgroup improved and further developed the data analysis scripts that were developed by the different RCGs in 2017. The subgroup produced overviews on regional fishery and several overviews on the sampling of the commercial fishing fleet in annex of the report.

The R scripts are documented on the RCG Baltic sharepoint and should also be available at the sharepoint of the Liaison meeting or the RCG Data Group

The two cod stocks and the central Baltic herring stock were chosen for the overview as all three of them are subject to a benchmark in 2019 – to be sent as input to WGBFAS and WKBALTCOD2. Suggested outputs were coordinated during the RCG meeting.

Suggestions for improvement: The template used for upload logs does not include a clear way to report the information about whether only last year data have been added or also updates to previous years data have been made. Some countries have issued the updates to earlier year time series but it remains unknown if those are the only updates. A simple yes/no variable to indicate this could be considered to clarify this issue.

In order to collect the log information more systematically, the upload logs could be pre-filled beforehand with all the datatypes CL, CE and CS in it.

3.1.2. RCG NS&EA

Data calls showed issues with the BMS fraction (interpretation of the requirement different between MS), timing of the data call for RCG to be earlier in the year

Used the same github as the Baltic and developed further exploratory analysis

3.1.3 RCG NA

RCG NA collated feedback on the 2018 data calls and summarised them in the RCGNA report.

MS responses to the ICES Assessment data call were summarised in order to improve future data calls. These related to general/procedural; working group specific; data provision and storage. Under general/procedural a workshop for stock coordinators was suggested to unify the data call, standardize formats and codification to align data provision to various WGs. Working group specific data call feedback mainly related to discrepancy in species/stock codes between working groups and aggregation levels. RCGNA recommended including EGEF and WGBYC data calls in the overall assessment data call and requesting recreational and survey data in the assessment data call for relevant stocks.

Data issues from the RDB data call were resolved at the RCGNA meeting so that all MS uploaded the required data, except countries with minimum catches. Northern Ireland and Wales are assumed to have uploaded as UK. Any data issues were identified through the upload logs, which were submitted by most MSs. The upload logs highlighted that more than 50% were unable to upload all their landings/effort data due for different reasons and more than a third could not upload all sampling data. This information is critical to making assumptions about the data available on the RDB and considering how these data are used and RCGNA emphasises the importance of submitting the upload logs.

3.1.4. RCG MED&BS

All MS provided data for the data calls, but these data were not used during the RCG. No RDB currently in use for the use of RCG; set up a steering group for setting up an RDB.

3.1.5. RCG LDF

The RCG LDP does not have a RDB at their disposal yet. The RCG plans to use the RDB-ES next year. In order to prepare the ground, the reference lists were sent to ICES for inclusion. RCG LDP will allocate more time to the processing of the RDB data next year.

3.1.6. RCG LP

5 separate case studies are on test with ICES during October to be presented at the RDB Steering Committee in November.

3.1.7. PGECON

PGECON does not process detailed data from MS

3.1.8. Diadromous SG

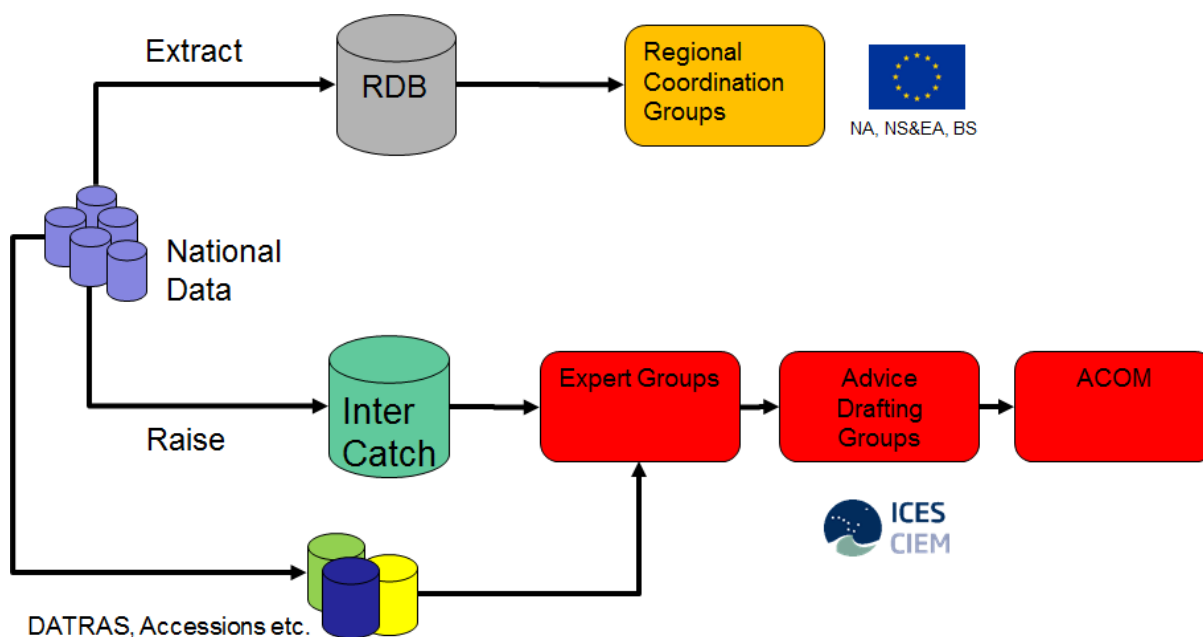
In 2018, the data call for eel (WGEEL) gathered data which were processed using R scripts developed in the collaborative platform github.

The SG discussed the possibility to join the RDB-ES, knowing eel assessment needs data from the Mediterranean and from freshwater, both absent from the RDB-ES today.

4. Future developments for Regional Databases (ToR 2C)

4.1. State of play

The current Regional Database (RDB) is used to store detailed commercial fisheries sampling data. This is a regionally coordinated database platform and covers fisheries in the North Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. It addresses fishery management needs related to the European Union Common Fisheries Policy. The use of the current RDB for the RCGs is shown below, alongside the InterCatch system used for ICES stock assessment:



The problems with the current processes include:

- Lack of transparency
- Duplication of effort
- Lack of consistency
- Lack of data quality indicators

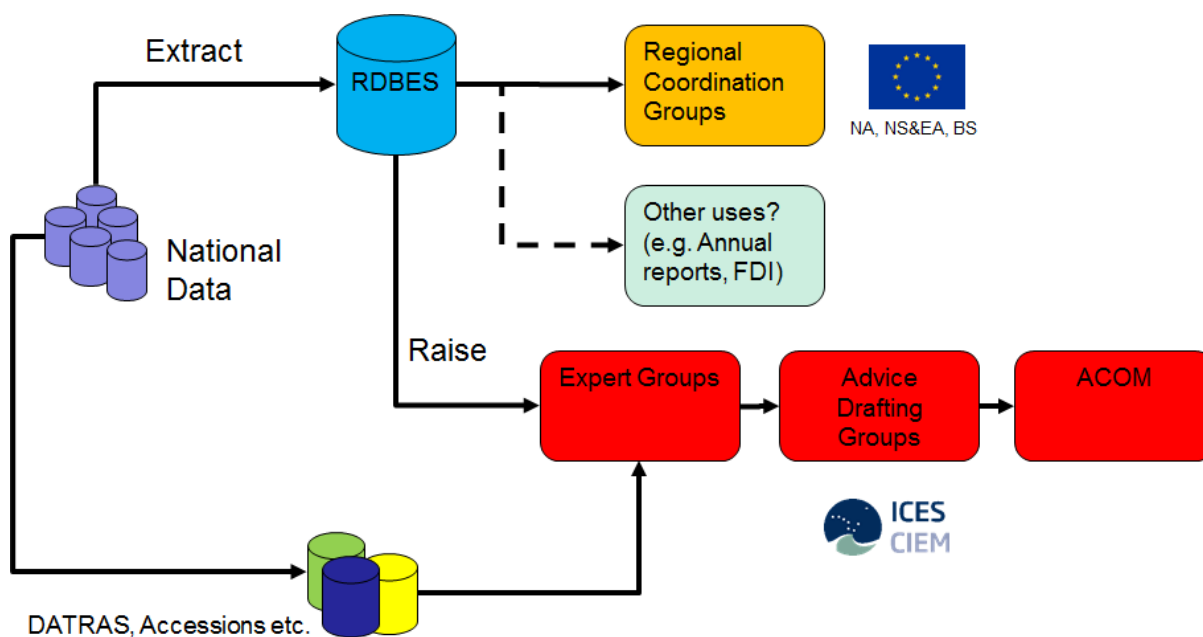
It has been recognised for many years that there is a need to have a new version of the RDB, which would also store details about how the sampling was performed and enable statistical

estimations to be made. This new version is known as the Regional Database and Estimation System, RDBES.

The aims of the RDBES are:

- 1) To ensure that data can be made available for the coordination of regional fisheries data sampling plans, in particular for the EU DC-MAP Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs),
- 2) To provide a regional estimation system such that statistical estimates of quantities of interest can be produced from sample data in order to deliver data for ICES stock assessments and advice,
- 3) To increase the data quality, documentation of data and ensuring of approved estimation methods are used,
- 4) To serve and facilitate the production of fisheries management advice and status reports,
- 5) To increase the awareness of fisheries data collected by the users of the RDBES and the overall usage of these data.

An outline of how the new RDBES will serve RCG and ICES Stock Assessment needs is shown below:



The development of the RDBES includes 4 main areas:

- Data Model
- Estimation Methods
- RDBES Application
- Workflow

The majority of the development work so far has concentrated on the RDBES Data Model - this is strongly based on the actual design of fisheries sampling programmes.

The designs used in the sampling of commercial fisheries in European waters are usually multi-stage.

In multi-stage designs the final sample (e.g., the fish sampled) is selected through a set of stages where the sampling units at each stage are sampled from the units chosen at the previous stage.

Some of the sampling stages will be stratified.

Selection at each stage can be probabilistic (e.g. random) or non- probabilistic (e.g. expert judgement, quotas)

There is no single sampling design – different programmes use a variety of different designs

Other considerations on sampling data can be addressed including recording refusals and non-responses, and clustering.

The RDBES Data Model allows different “hierarchies” to be defined based on the sampling schemes that are currently in use - these can be added to in the future. The 8 hierarchies that have been identified so far are shown in the table below:

At-sea sampling				On-shore sampling				
	Hierarchy 1	Hierarchy 2	Hierarchy 3	Hierarchy 4	Hierarchy 5	Hierarchy 6	Hierarchy 7	Hierarchy 8
Tables in the upper hierarchy	Design	Design	Design	Design	Design	Design	Design	Design
	Sampling Details	Sampling Details	Sampling Details	Sampling Details	Sampling Details	Sampling Details	Sampling details	Sampling details
	Vessel	Fishing Trip	Temporal Event	On-shore	On-shore	On-shore	On-shore	Temporal Event
	Fishing Trip	Fishing Operation	Vessel	Fishing Trip	Landing Event	Fishing Trip	Species Selection	Vessel
	Fishing Operation	Species Selection	Fishing Trip	Landing Event	Species Selection	Species Selection	Sample	Landing Event
	Species Selection	Sample	Fishing Operation	Species Selection	Sample	Sample		Species selection
			Species Selection	Sample				Sample
			Sample					
	Lower Hierarchy A	Lower Hierarchy B	Lower Hierarchy C	Lower Hierarchy D				
Tables in the lower hierarchy	Length frequency	Length frequency	Biological Variable table					
	Biological Variable table							

ICES have begun work on developing the RDBES application but have needed to wait until the Data Model reached sufficient stability before they can test it with real data.

There is a roadmap for the switch-over between the RDB and the new RDBES and this is shown below.

Year	Current Regional Database (RDB)	Regional Database & Estimation System (RDBES)
2017	Data call	In development
2018	Data call	In development
2019	Data call	In development and test data call
2020	No data call. Database frozen.	Data call.
2021	No data call. Database frozen.	Data call. Data used for estimation and assessment of selected stocks.
2022	No data call. Database frozen.	Data call. Data used for estimation and assessment.

The next steps include the following workshops :

- a User Requirements workshop (Oct 2018),
- a Population workshop (Feb 2019) and
- an Estimation workshop (Oct/Nov 2019).

4.2. Agreements and recommendations on Regional Data Base

On funding of the RDB-ES development: The funding of the development of the RDB-ES is still an open question. The hosting and maintenance of the existing RDB by ICES is currently funded by the European Commission under an administrative agreement. ICES have made funding available for the first 2 years of development of the new RDBES but this period will be coming to an end soon. The RCG Baltic and RCG NA (Rec. NA 2018-R5) stated that the RDBES was a key tool for RCGs to coordinate regional sampling and its further development should be continued. RCG NS&EA (Rec. 2018-R2) recommended ICES to provide a cost estimate for the remaining RDBES development work, in order to seek for a source of financing.

On the new RDB-ES steering group ; The RCG Baltic (Agreement 2018-A5) and RCG NA (Agreement 2018-A3) agreed to adopt the new RDB steering group structure with two representatives from each RCG (the RCG NS&EA have already accepted the new group structure by correspondence). One representative from each ICES member countries are also allowed to participate;

On RDB-ES data calls for the year 2018. The RCG Baltic (Agreements 2018-A6 & A7) and RCG NA (Agreement 2018-A4) agreed to adopt the new RDB ES data policy as circulated to all NCs on the 31th August 2018;

On providing data from RDB-ES to assessment working groups: The NCs at the RCG Baltic 2018 agreed to grant ICES expert groups and related benchmark groups providing advice to fisheries management access to detailed data for the sub-division 22-32 (Baltic Sea) stored in the RDBES but only for the use by these groups;

On RCG data call 2019: RCG Baltic (Agreement 2018-A8) agreed to prepare the RCG data call in sufficient time to upload the data collected in 2018 in March 2019, to make intersessional work and RCG meeting in June possible;

On sampling data in the RDB-ES: The RCG Baltic (Rec. 2018-R3) and RCG NA (Rec. 2018-R3) recommended the development and use of the RDB-ES to store and analyse sampling data;

On inclusion of new types of data in the RDB-ES. RCG NSEA (Rec. NSEA 2018-R9) recommended that ICES working groups dealing with diadromous species (WGBAST and WGNAS) should work towards the implementation of RDB-ES database to store their primary data. RCG NA (Rec. NA 2018-R8) agreed means and processes for inclusion of marine recreational fisheries data into the RDBES.

On RDB-ES information to serve the needs of the DCF report tables. RCG NA (Rec. NA 2018-R4) recommended ICES to evaluate the ability of the RDBES to populate the DCF National Report tables (LM was informed that fishpi2 WP6 will initiate the work)

On the Mediterranean Regional data base. RCG Med&BS (Rec. Med&BS 2018-R3) recommended the setting up of a Regional Database for the RCG Med&BS

5. Data calls - main changes in data calls anticipated next year

There are no major changes anticipated next year on data calls, except a potential merging of FDI and MED&BS data calls for STECF, and the inclusion of WGEF and WGCEPH (and potentially others) data calls into the main ICES assessment data calls covering AWG needs.

6. Discussion on possible follow-up to the main outputs and recommendations

6.1. The 2018 RCGs - specific recommendations addressed to the Liaison Meeting (ToR 3A)

None

6.2. PGECON – outcomes and recommendations from their 2018 meeting(s) (ToR 3B)

Under ToR2 in PGECON 2018, the group worked on the establishment of rules of procedure for PGECON, prepared draft version of it and discussed the option to modify PGECON status to RCG. The task of PGECON is to develop and coordinate methodologies and measures to achieve higher quality and reliability of economic and social data in the fisheries, aquaculture and fish processing industry. For this purpose, PGECON prepares recommendations which should be a basis for the practical implementation on the agreements. One of the tasks for ToR 2 was to improve the implementation of recommendations. With the current status under the umbrella of the Commission Expert Working Group, PGECON does not grant it any specific role in decision-making and recommendations from PGECON are not obligatory to implement unless they are included in MS NWP. In the scenario for PGECON being an RCG, recommendations and already applicable methods for data collection could be included into pan-regional work plans thus formalizing recommendations and making them legally binding for MSs to implement and consequently contributing to the development of assurance of quality principles and data reliability. PGECON chairs prepared summary of information with background, objectives, pros and cons and follow up to facilitate MS discussions and referred to each MS to debate and decide on the status. Decisions should be reported back to PGECON chairs and DG MARE. From this point, decision on the status is in progress and next steps are:

- Wait until consultation of MS is finished (end of the year), decision to be taken during a NC meeting (Rec. PGECON 2018-R2-3)
- Continue the work on RoP (Rec. PGECON 2018-R4)
- Start the reflection on the development of RWP, and make proposals to RCGs June

PGECON 2018 also reviewed case studies from Lithuania and Finland on the methodologies for capital value estimation, agreed on the further elaboration of improvement and updates on this methodology in each MS (Rec. PGECON 2018-R1) and proposed terms of references for the workshop. Furthermore, PGECON agreed on the application of the activity levels in the socioeconomic analysis of fleet data (PGECON 2018-R5), prepared recommendations on the number of definitions and methodologies in small scale fisheries (Rec. PGECON 2018-R6-9)

and fish processing sector (Rec. PGECON 2018-R10-13). PGECON also reviewed the preliminary outcomes from the SecFish project (Rec. PGECON 2018-R14). Details of the recommendations are presented in Annex:

6.3. STECF EWG and STECF Plenary - outcomes and recommendations from their 2018 meetings (ToR 3C)

List of STECF meetings related to DCF from last year and anticipation of the next ones

The [EWG 17-17](#) "Compilation of the new DCF Annual Report template" (Brussels, Belgium, 16-19 Oct and 23-27 Oct 2017) compiled the template for DCF Annual Reports (ARs) and suggested IT tools to help evaluating ARs.

At the [EWG 17-13](#) "Evaluation of DCF National work plans amendments for 2018/19" (Hamburg, Germany, 13-17 Nov 2017), the amendments submitted by 19 Member States of their national Work Plans (WPs) for 2018-2019 were evaluated.

The [EWG 18-04](#) "Preparation for the evaluation of the list of mandatory research surveys at sea" (Varese, Italy, 14-18 May 2018) developed a 'Decision Support Tool' and the structure of a stocks and survey database to help an EWG in 2019 in a full review of research surveys at sea.

At the [EWG 18-10](#) "Evaluation of DCF 2017 Annual Reports and Data Transmission 2017" (Brussels, Belgium, 25-29 Jun 2018), the DCF ARs 2017 and Data Transmission (DT) issues were evaluated. The EWG also provided suggestions for improvements for the evaluation of ARs and DT issues.

The next relevant STECF EWG ([18-18](#)) is taking place 5-9 Nov 2018 in Bremerhaven, Germany, evaluating the WP amendments for 2019, improving further the AR and DT evaluation and providing input for the EU-MAP revision.

6.4. Intersessional subgroups (ToR 3D)

The RCGs reviewed the output of intersessional RCG work in 2017/2018 and discussed how the efficiency of subgroup work can be improved. Guidance was taken from the FishPi2 WP1 output on governance and the following conclusions were reached across RCG Baltic, RCG NA and RCG NS &EA:

Subgroup work will operate under several subgroup headings to include:

- Governance
- Implication of management measures on data collection
- Data Analysis and Quality
- End-user RCG Interaction
- Diadromous Fishes
- Regional Database
- Surveys
- Regional Sampling Plans

The above proposed subgroups will function as umbrella groups to facilitate the intersessional work on specific tasks. It is aimed that small and well defined intersessional tasks supported by the commitment of national experts will allow the RCG to progress its intersessional work more efficiently. The organisation of the subgroups will be task driven rather than static and

the coordination and prioritisation of pan regional subgroup work will be carried out jointly by the RCGs. For a full list of 2018-2019 intersessional RCG subgroup tasks, please revert to Annex 2.

Functioning of ISSG : Commitments from individuals are sought by member states and participants are asked to allocate at least one working week toward the subgroup. For pan regional sub-groups, it is hoped to have at least two participants per RCG to ensure regional input and expertise. After sub groups are set up, the subgroup chairs are asked to submit a simple workplan of how the task(s) will be addressed and whether any prioritization is required. The expected output will be short reports with the outcomes from the different task, standalone annexes, authors, clear advice on next tasks and actions, and decisions to be taken. The report will be submitted to RCG members one month before the first meeting of either RCG NS&EA, NA or Baltic and the sub group chairs report annually to the RCG plenary (or plenaries if pan-regional).

The intersessional sub-groups (ISSGs) are then listed in a Regional Work Plan. A natural situation would be to place the list of all ISSG under the list of eligible meetings in the table on Planned regional and international coordination (Table 7A)

In the Regional Work Programme Table 7A, the column for the countries would not contain names of experts, but number of working days necessary to conduct the work. Whether, the RCG could attribute the number of days to each expected contributing countries or a global number of days remains to be discussed. The idea is to give the countries and institutes the nomination of the most relevant expert (who may be unknown from the RCG participants) and guarantee the working days offered for the tasks.

Other RCGs (MED&BS) have initiated subgroups and agreed to structure them as mentioned above. The list of all subgroups, their mandates and current demands for participation is given in Annex.

7. Governance (ToR 4)

7.1. Follow-up of RCG RoP adoption in each of the RCGs (ToR 4A)

7.1.1. Status of RoP

It was agreed that the RoP should be made publically available on the DCF website, as separate files from the RCG Reports. In this way, interested stakeholders can be informed as to the way each RCG operates and how they can proceed with data requests. COM asked all RCG chairs to provide the latest version of adopted RoP, so that COM proceeds with their publication.

	Initiated	Drafted	Finalised	Adopted	Availability
RCG Baltic	2017	2017	2018	2018	NYA
RCG NS&EA	2017	2017	2018	2018	NYA*
RCG NA	2017	2017	2018	2018	NYA*
RCG MED&BS	2017				
RCG LDF	2018	2018	2018	2018	NYA*
RCG LP	2018	2018			
PGECON	2018				
Diadromous SG	2018				

*NYA : Not yet available on a public website

7.1.2. Agreements and recommendations on Governance issues

Agreement for merging RCG-NA and RCG- NS&EA : The RCGNA (RCG NA 2018-A1) and RCG NS&EA both agreed to merge in 2019 and hold two joint annual meetings. LM validated this choice.

Agreement to split RCGs in two sessions per year: A proposal was made during the Liaison meeting 2017 to split the RCGs in two sessions:

- one involving mainly scientists with the aim of drafting agreements and recommendations to be endorsed by all MS.
- one session in September gathering NC from all MS (?) to discuss and endorse all agreements and recommendations.

Although this proposal was not discussed in all RCGs, LM agreed to put this new framework on test in 2019. See also section 6.7 on venues and chairs for 2019.

Agreement to set up a joint secretary for all RCGs and recommendation for funding. RCG Baltic (Rec.Baltic 2018-R2) and RCG NS&EA (Rec.NSEA 2018-R1) agreed to request from the European Commission the exploration of financial possibilities, e.g. in the framework of the direct funding possibilities of the EMFF, to finance a joint secretary services for the disposal of the all-northern RCGs;

Roll over of the agreed Rules of Procedures. The RCG NA agreed to roll over the Rules of Procedures drafted in Galway, September 2017 and revised intersessionally in December 2017 (Agreement NA 2018-A2). The existing Rules of Procedures will be reviewed when the RCGNA merges with the RCG NS&EA in 2019;

A draft document with RCG-LP ROP is available on the SharePoint. This document is not yet officially adopted, although it has already been reviewed by a large part of the MS involved in LP fisheries. RCG-LP chair will circulate it to all NCs until the end of October and final approval is expected by the end of the year.

The RCG NS&EA recommended a draft process and guidelines for external requests. Many recommendations and requests arriving to RCGs are ill-defined (Rec. NSEA 2018-R6).

8. Future steps in RCG work and Structure of RCGs (ToR 4B)

8.1. Agreements and recommendations from RCGs on Quality

Last haul data from the national control authorities. The RCG Baltic 2018 recommended that the last-haul data from the national control authorities (from the beginning until the end of 2018) should be provided to the National DCF Correspondents (Rec. Baltic 2018-R1);

RCG Baltic and RCG NA recommend that the **draft Control regulation is reviewed** and amended where required to allow retention of personal data for more than 5 year for scientific purposes, to fulfil data requirements under the DCF (Rec. NA-R1 and Baltic 2018-R5).

The RCG NS&EA Endorsed parts of the outcome from the metier workshop, with some of the outputs thought to be tested before it could be agreed;

8.2. Agreements and recommendations from RCGs on Regional Sampling Plans

Recommendations to the FishPi2 project.

The RCG NA suggested the following ideas for consideration in the fishPi2 project, and apologizes if these considerations are already on the table:

- Investigate the redundancies of the proposed RSP with the National sampling plans and full coverage of the different species/stocks covered by the selected fishery, and propose ways to address them;
- Provide a weighting system on species/stocks caught by the selected fishery based on end-user requirements. The objective being to concentrate on the species of interest for the end-user;
- Evaluate the number of samples which would be needed for the variables of interest of the major species, and the consequences of being sub-optimal; Evaluate the potential national effects in e.g. the length structure of the catches, and their consequences on the RSP;

The RCG NA recommended that FishPi 2 WP 7 focusses training on the implementation of statistically sound sampling at two levels (Rec. NA 2018-R2):

- At the technical level to support laboratories to progressively modify their existing sampling programme towards 4S;
- At the management level to introduce the concept, requirements and implications of 4S sampling to managers responsible of the implementation of the DCF.

RCG NA Proposed timeline for implementation of fishPi2 WP2 and WP3 outputs

June 2019	Sep. 2019	Jan 2020	June 2020	Sept 2020	Jan 2021
WP2 case studies complete practicalities proposed	Agreement by NC to propose a Pilot Study (PS) in the 2020 Regional WP	Implementation of PS	Review the start of PS and see if adjustments to be done	Agree on adjustments if needed	Going routine in a RWP
WP3 proposed candidates new fisheries to go RSP. RCG to set up SG to develop practicalities	Agreement by NC on the chosen fisheries and setting of SG		Discuss practicalities for candidate fisheries Other candidates?	Agree and set up RWP	Implementation of PS

For RCG LP, the main common fields identified for cooperation among the RCGs are the ones related with the design of the regional sampling plans based on statistically sound sampling designs and data management, which includes the archiving of data and the processes of quality assurance and quality control (i.e. development of guidelines to evaluate the quality of the data, development of common software tools in R etc.).

8.3. Agreements and recommendations from RCGs on diadromous sub-group

RCG NA recommended that the Salmon and Eel pan regional sub-group should be managed as an intersessional group and follow the recommendations from FishPi2 WP1 on how these groups might work;

8.4. Agreements and recommendations from RCGs on Recreational fisheries

In RCG NA, the role of regional coordination in Marine Recreational Fisheries (MRF) surveys was discussed in relation to the projects funded by the EC. FishPi2, STREAM, and SECFISH, which are all included studies of MRF regional cooperation, but the projects were not sufficiently advanced to provide useful insight at this stage. All projects are due to report in May 2019, so the RCG NA agreed the role of regional cooperation for surveys of marine recreational fisheries in 2019 alongside advice from the WGRFS (Rec. NA 2018-R10). RCG NA highlighted that further studies were needed on post-release mortality, and that MRF should be included in more stock assessments (Rec. NA 2018-R9). RCG NA (Rec. NA 2018-R7) also endorsed the need for multispecies data collection for marine recreational fisheries pilot surveys, extending from the actual EU-MAP list of species to cover

On variables to be collected, RCG NSEA (Rec. NSEA 2018-R10) recommended WGNAS and WGBAST to define for salmon stocks, which variables have to be collected, and advised on temporal frequency.

On new forum for recreational fisheries discussion: RCG MED&BS (Rec. Med&BS 2018-R2) recommended the organization of an ad-hoc workshop on recreational fisheries, along with the creation of two Subgroups: one on Data requirements & data transmission issues and a second Subgroup on sampling stratification and optimization of biological data

On the socio-economics of recreational fisheries: PGECON agreed (PGECON 2018-A3) that a ToR should be added for their meeting in 2019 on Aquaculture with specific reference on the land locked MS and a ToR on recreational catch data

8.5. Agreements and recommendations from RCGs on PETS sampling

There was no recommendations from RCGs on PETS sampling since the project FishPi2 is currently working on risk analysis (sensitivity of PETS encounter by métier / area). RCGs are waiting for the final outcome of this exercise to coordinate sampling in 2019, with a particular focus on those métiers at risk and not covered with at-sea observers. In order to prepare at best the RCGs meetings in 2019 on this issue, an ISSG on Update of Risk Assessment for bycatch in the North Atlantic was set up.

Issues with at-sea observer training (e.g. mammals released out of the nets before arriving on the deck) and refinement of the protocols were discussed. These issues will need to be addressed in 2019.

9. AOB (ToR 5)

9.1. Requested outcomes of RCGs List of scientific surveys; Table 1A of Work Plan; contributions to EU-MAP revision (ToR 5A)

The Member States and Regional Coordination Groups were requested to populate the two tables ('stocks' and 'surveys' tables) with a proposed list of surveys, to be included in the new DCF legal framework. In addition, the RCGs were asked whether the starting point for this exercise - as suggested by the EWG 18-04 - should be the stocks listed under Tables 1A and 1C of the EU MAP. COM informed the RCG that the end users will also be requested to provide their contribution on the use of survey data. It was agreed that the chairs of the RCGs Baltic, North Sea & EA, North Atlantic will coordinate this exercise with the respective MS and will provide COM with a consolidated file. The Med & BS MS were given the Liaison Meeting dates as a deadline to provide feedback. A similar approach as the one followed for the RCGs Baltic, North Sea & EA, North Atlantic, will be pursued for the case of Med & BS.

RCG Baltic agreed not to apply any cost sharing of surveys in the Baltic for 2019 (Agreement Baltic 2018-A4).

The RCG NSEA have made a first round to populate the stock database table from the STECF meeting on surveys. The starting point has been the Table 1A species. However, as many more stocks can be present within the same species and area this has been checked against the ICES advice.

RCG LP : No surveys

9.2. Landing obligation (Discuss main issues that came out of the RCGs) (ToR 5B)

RCG NS&EA, Baltic and NA reviewed the report of the subgroup on LO, and new ToRs were needed and suggested..

The issue was not discussed this year in RCG LP, but information can be found in previous years reports (see RCM Med&BS and LP 2016 Report). From these discussions, it appeared that landing obligation of large pelagics was not seen as a major issue since already covered by the RFMOs recommendations.

During the LM, it was advised for all Member States to

- make sure all fractions are covered by sampling onboard;
- Test the possibility to sample the BMS fraction on shore, depending on which route this landing component will take;
- Make sure that all fishermen declaration forms are well integrated on the MS statistical systems.

The pan regional RCG subgroup on the evaluation of management measures on data collection will focus in 2018/2019 on evaluating the implication of the LO on national and regional catch sampling programmes and considering metrics for demonstrating any impact; reviewing the BMS fraction in the RDB and reviewing other available metrics (e.g. refusal rates) and data sources (eg FDI, last haul data); cataloguing ongoing analysis and exemptions and providing recommendations on how to increase the availability of BMS data in the RDB.

9.3. Agree on a list of recommendations relating to Review and prioritize DCF-related study proposals from RCGs, PGECON, EGs etc. Planning of RCG work for 2019. (ToR 5C)

Upon COM request, the LM agreed to keep the additional step of presenting and discussing RCG recommendations at STECF plenary level. COM will add this point to the STECF plenary agenda of November. The LM chair will provide all recommendations before STECF plenary.

In relation to the prioritization of DCF-related study proposals from RCGs, PGECON, EGs, RCGs NS&EA, Baltic and NA prioritized the development of the RDBES. The RCG NS&EA is proposing two project proposals to be considered funded through the EMFF direct management funds assigned for support for the DCF fisheries data collection:

9.4. List of recommendations to end-users

- RCG Baltic agreed that data on maturity sampled on surveys conducted in quarter 3 and 4 are not used in stock assessment due to wrong timing. According to the overview in Table 1 in annex, stocks that are currently sampled but not used are highlighted.
- RCG NA recommended that a solution to the storage and maintenance of variables related to metiers was required. This needs to be a reference source that (1) end-users, the public and data managers and practitioners can access and refer to, and (2) RCGs can administer and keep updated and maintained.
- RCG NS&EA recommended stock assessments to include recreational removals estimates;
- RCG NS&EA has set up a SG to develop criteria to evaluate if at-sea sampling programmes actually meet end-user needs for PETS;

- RCG NS&EA recommends to pay attention in VMS data & confidentiality in the specifications of the data calls;
- The RCG NS&EA and Diadromous SG proposed several recommendations to WGNAS and WGBAST :
 - consider the list of required data for Atlantic salmon stock assessments. These WGs are requested to report back to RCG in 2019 with suggestions for changes and/or additions to the required data for stock asst;
 - to define the requirements for a river to be monitored for Atlantic salmon at regional level;
 - work towards the implementation of RDBES database to store their primary data;
 - suggest a selection of stocks from which salmon variables (juveniles, smolts, ascending adults) have to be collected;
 - to comment on current quality assurance in their data, and recommend actions to improve QA in future.
- The RCG Diadromous SG noted that current awareness of the database is limited among potential end users;
- RCG LP : During the meeting several participants complained about the lack of Bluefin Tuna coordinated workshops for age reading and calibration. It is the Groups view that ICCAT should promote these workshops including participants from of all CPCs regularly.

9.5. List of recommended meetings for 2019 as guidance for MS. (ToR 5D)

The list was not possible to construct during the LM.

9.6. Announcement of new chairs (where relevant), next meeting(s) and venues (ToR 5E)

The spring RCG meetings involves mainly scientists with the aim of reporting back the results from sub group work, plan ahead, draft decisions, agreements and recommendations to be endorsed by all MS in September meeting. No mandatory participation of NCs.

The Liaison meeting in September is for RCG chairs, end users, Commission and all NCs. There will be 1-2 days for NC, (exact date to be decided later). The aim is to gather all NCs from all MS to discuss, make decisions, endorse all agreements and recommendations (from the June meetings) for all regions.

- PGECON : April (TBC) 2019, Ljubljana (SLO),
 - chairs : Evelina Sabatella and Emmett Jackson
- RCG Baltic : 10 -14 June, Lyngby (DEN),
 - chairs : Maria Hansson and Ari Leskelä
- RCG NA – NS&EA (+ Diadromous ISSG) : 3 – 7 June, Gent (BEL),
 - chairs : Els Torreele and Leonie O’Dowd
- RCG MED&BS : date tbd, Malta,
 - chairs : Apostolos Karagiannakos and Simona Nicheva
- RCG LDF : 25 – 27 (?), June , Tenerife (SPA),
 - chairs : Sieto Verver
- RCG LP : tbd
- LM 2019 : 3-5 September, Bruxelles,
 - chair : Joël Vigneau

Annex 1 – Recommendations from RCGs and the PGECON

LM agreed to follow the same process done in 2017 and send for STECF information and opinion the recommendations stemming from RCG 2018 work. RCCG LDF did not present any recommendations during its 2018 meeting. RCGs will forward the recommendations to the responsible persons for the follow-up actions.

RCG NS&EA 2018 - Agreements

RCG NS&EA 2018-A1 - Suggestions for intersessional subgroups	
When	Copenhagen, September 2018
What	RCG NSEA 2018 agrees to establish intersessional subgroups. Tasks for intersessional groups are defined in annex 2. Participants in each subgroup are suggested in RCG NS&EA 2018 report.
Who	Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Copenhagen, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, the United kingdom. Spain
Supporting Documentation	RCG NS&EA 2018 report

RCG NS&EA 2018-A2 - Outcome of FishPi2	
When	Copenhagen, September 2018
What	RCG NSEA 2018 agree the outcome of FishPi2 WP1-WP8 will contribute to strengthen the regional coordination and will have impact on the development of RCG work. Outcome has to be considered in future work within the RCG.
Who	Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Copenhagen, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, the United kingdom. Spain
Supporting Documentation	RCG NS&EA 2018 report

RCG NS&EA 2018-A3 - Planning of work for EU-Map revision	
When	Copenhagen, September 2018
What	Establish a pan-regional subgroup 'RCG – EUMAP 2020 & beyond: objective is to be proactive for the new EUMAP from 2020/2021 onwards. Suggestion is to have one person by MS – to be started by correspondence – physical meeting ex in January. Request to be formulated to the EC to establish and sent timeline to NC & RCG how EC sees the progressing of the EUMAP & EMFF for the years 2018-2019-2020
Who	Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Copenhagen, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, the United kingdom. Spain
Supporting Documentation	RCG NS&EA 2018 report

RCG NS&EA 2018-A4 - RDB upload of 2018 data – datacall with deadline 1 March 2019.	
When	Copenhagen, September 2018
What	RCG NSEA 2018 agreed to prepare all steps of data to be able to upload the data collected in 2018 in March 2019, to make intersessional work and RCG meeting in June possible. To ensure to have data for the data subgroup to work and run the overviews, all data from all MS need to be uploaded 1 month before the RCG
Who	Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Copenhagen, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, the United kingdom. Spain
Supporting Documentation	RCG NS&EA 2018 report

RCG NS&EA 2018 - Recommendations

RCG NSEA 2018-R1. Establish and finance a secretariat for supporting RCG work	
Recommendation 1	RCG NSEA 2018 agrees to request from the European Commission for them to explore financial possibilities, e.g. in the framework of the direct funding possibilities of the EMFF, to finance a joint secretary services for the disposal of the all-northern RCGs.
Justification	The Regional Co-ordination Groups (RCGs) are important strategic bodies for co-ordinating the collection, analysis and evaluation of European fisheries data. There are five RCGs all of which currently rely upon the RCG Chairs to provide the Secretariat functions of their respective groups. As these groups mature and define their ToRs, develop multiple sub-groups with formal remits, delivery structures and work plans, it is becoming clear that there is a need to consider the provision of dedicated Secretariat support for the RCG Chairs to ensure the efficient use of RCG MS resource allocation. A consistent approach to administering RCG activities, facilitating communication, helping to drive intersessional work and supporting the work of sub-groups would significantly increase the performance of the RCGs
Follow-up actions needed	Build upon the final outcome from FishPi2, WP1.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Commission for finance aspects RCG NSEA to pick up outcome.
Time frame (Deadline)	RCG NSEA meeting June 2019

RCG NSEA 2018-R2. Funding of RDBES development	
Recommendation 2	The RDBES is a key tool for RCGs to coordinate regional sampling and its further development should be continued.
Justification	The RDBES is a key tool for RCGs to coordinate regional sampling. The European Commission currently pays for the maintenance and hosting of the RDB under an administrative agreement, but not for any development. ICES have provided 2 years funding to begin developing the RDBES, which is the successor to the existing RDB. However the development of the RDBES will not be completed during this time period so further funding for the development must be found. There are 3 sources that this funding could come from: 1) Direct funding from the European commission, 2) Funding from MS, 3) Funding from ICES. These funding sources aren't mutually exclusive and should all be investigated.
Follow-up actions needed	ICES to provide a cost estimate for the remaining RDBES development work.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Henrik Kjems-Nielsen will produce the cost estimates. RCG recommendations will be submitted and discussed in the Liaison meeting.
Time frame (Deadline)	2018

RCG NSEA 2018-R3 - Review and amendment of proposed control regulation to ensure DCF data requirements are met	
Recommendation 3	The RCG NSEA 2018 recommends that the draft Control regulation is reviewed and amended where required to allow retention of personal data for more than 5 year for scientific purposes, to fulfil data requirements under the DCF.
Justification	<p>Articles 110, 111, 112, 113</p> <p>There are strong concerns about the stipulation that Personal data can only be retained for 5 years –under the GDPR there are allowable derogations from the normal Data Subject rights when data is used for scientific purposes.</p> <p>The proposed full anonymization of VMS and log book data after 5 years will heavily restrict the utility of this data for the purpose of scientific analysis under the DCF.</p> <p>Time series of longer than five years are required for analysis and the provision of scientific advice to support the CFP.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<p>MS to coordinate review and comments on articles 110, 111, 112, 113 and amend where appropriate, to ensure full data functionality to implement DCF.</p> <p>MS to make coordinated submission during legislative negotiations based on review.</p>
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Com, Member States
Time frame (Deadline)	2018/2019

RCG NSEA 2018-R4 - Endorsement of outcome from metier workshop 2018	
Recommendation 4	The RCG NSEA 2018 recommends to have a publicly available repository for common reference lists, scripts, documentation and métier descriptions
Justification	<p>The RCG agreed that the level 6 metier should be constructed to enable comparison between countries and across regions rather than to describe national variability. Further detail needed by MSs for national purposes can be described at level 7.</p> <p>It was agreed that there was a need to develop / continue to develop codes tools, based on other data sources than the RDB, to support harmonization in reporting to COM, across MS. This could be through a data sub-group and/or through a further workshop. It was agreed that the RCGs should develop the ToRs for follow up work which might include the following:</p> <p>To facilitate harmonization of métier assignment, set up and manage a public repository for storing reference lists, documentation of procedures, scripts related to assigning métiers to transversal data as well as métier descriptions.</p> <p>Collect documentation of logic applied by MS to assign métiers</p> <p>Make metier descriptions based on template.</p> <p>Species list: finalise grouping into species groups.</p> <p>Clean up metier lists: removing overlapping metiers standardize the codes.</p> <p>Make a script for a standard procedure for assigning metiers based on a common data format, taking into account the recommendations made at the Metier workshop.</p> <p>Test effort calculation method agreed in the WKTRANSVERSAL in Nicosia for the RDB LE table.</p> <p>Test impact of change of measure to determine target assemblage (to value of landings)</p>
Follow-up actions needed	It would be useful to have a publicly available repository for common reference lists, scripts, documentation and métier descriptions, and it was suggested that a GitHub under the ICES RCG's would be preferable due to the flexibility that it offers. There is a need for harmonisation and standardisation of the procedures and rules used to define the métiers (common approaches and reference tables following DCF standards) in order to improve the interoperability and compatibility across nations.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Com, Member States
Time frame (Deadline)	2018/2019

RCG NSEA 2018-R5 - Survey and stock table for Annex 10	
Recommendation 5	RCGNSEA 2018 recommends to finalize the work done on the population of the stock database table.
Justification	The RCG NSEA have made a first round to populate the stock database table from the STECF meeting on surveys. The starting point has been the table 1A species. However, as many more stocks can be present within the same species and area this has been checked against the ICES advice. If now advice has been present the species is just listed.
Follow-up actions needed	Intersessional work needed to finalize the population of the stock database
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Com, Member States
Time frame (Deadline)	2018/2019

RCG NSEA 2018-R6 - Draft process and guidelines for external requests	
Recommendation 6	RCGNSEA 2018 recommends to design a proper set of guidelines for all WKs and WGs to follow for writing recommendations to others.
Justification	Under the EU-MAP RCGs have responsibility for regional coordination at marine region level of data collection activities (chapter III; 1.3, 2 (a; (i, ii, iii, iv) c iii), 3 (a), 3(c); chapter IV, 3). As such, they constitute a forum for discussion of MS and end-user needs. Those needs are anticipated to arrive to RCGs in the form of recommendations (e.g., from ICES EGs) and may range from minor (impacting only one end-user, having no side-effects in terms of data quality of other variables, having little to no changes cost or human resources) to major (impacting various end-users and estimates, implying significant changes in cost and human resource allocation). For effective and timely decision making, the procedure for consideration and decision making of those requests – which framework is outlined in the Rules of Procedures of each RCG – must be clear not only to the decision makers but also to the ones that request.
Follow-up actions needed	<p>Guidelines are needed on how the request should be framed and substantiated.</p> <p>With regards to the procedure, when an end-user has a request or recommendation to RCG the following route should be followed</p> <p>Timely communication with RCG chairs and circulation ahead of the meeting</p> <p>Minor requests involving simple decisions should be put to discussion and answered in the next RCG meeting</p> <p>Major requests involving more complex decisions will likely require the planning of intersessional work (e.g., by an RCG subgroup) at the next RCG meeting with feedback for decision in yr+1</p> <p>With regards to the requests themselves:</p> <p>Recommendations should have a clear title, a clear background and justification and, particularly a clear set of goals and/or actions that the requester wishes the RCG to take.</p> <p>Where applicable it will be beneficial for discussion that the request is accompanied by a stand alone document, documenting its legal framework, background analyses, discussion of possible end-uses affected and benefits of implementation</p>
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	ICES & MS
Time frame (Deadline)	2018/2019

RCG NSEA 2018-R7 - WGNAS and WGBAST to consider the list of required data for Atlantic salmon stock assessments	
Recommendation 7	The RCG recommends WGNAS and WGBAST to consider the list of required data for Atlantic salmon stock assessments. A draft list is to be found in the 2018 RCG report. WGNAS and WGBAST are requested to report back to RCG in 2019 with suggestions for changes and/or additions to the required data to conduct the Atlantic salmon stock assessment
Justification	At the RCG Baltic meeting in 2017, the Diadromous Sub Group (RCG) directed recommendations to the ICES Expert Groups WGNAS (Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon) and WGBAST (Working Group on Baltic Salmon and Trout) and asked for a response regarding end-user needs for stock assessment. A response was delivered from WGBAST. Although the feedback did not cover all information/data needs, it highlighted some important issues about the process of selecting Index Rivers and a brief evaluation of the need to coordinate parts of the data collection. Due to heavy workload with a full assessment in 2017, feedback was not delivered by WGNAS although the recommendations were discussed at the working group meeting. To cover the total data/information needs for stock assessment, the RCG has elaborated the recommendations from 2017 into specific points that should be addressed by ICES EGs on diadromous fish before the RCG meeting in 2019, of which this is the second point.
Follow-up actions needed	WGNAS and WGBAST are requested to report back to RCG in 2019 with suggestions for changes and/or additions to the required data to conduct the Atlantic salmon stock assessment.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	WGBAST, WGNAS & RCG
Time frame (Deadline)	2018/2019

RCG NSEA 2018-R8 - WGNAS and WGBAST to define the requirements for a river to be monitored for Atlantic salmon at regional level	
Recommendation 8	The RCG recommends WGNAS and WGBAST to define the requirements for a river to be monitored for Atlantic salmon at regional level. Based on this, a list of the rivers to be monitored for the Atlantic salmon shall be forwarded to the RCG.
Justification	At the RCG Baltic meeting in 2017, the Diadromous Sub Group (RCG) directed recommendations to the ICES Expert Groups WGNAS (Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon) and WGBAST (Working Group on Baltic Salmon and Trout) and asked for a response regarding end-user needs for stock assessment. A response was delivered from WGBAST (Annex 1). Although the feedback did not cover all information/data needs, it highlighted some important issues about the process of selecting Index Rivers and a brief evaluation of the need to coordinate parts of the data collection. Due to heavy workload with a full assessment in 2017, feedback was not delivered by WGNAS although the recommendations were discussed at the working group meeting. To cover the total data/information needs for stock assessment, the RCG has elaborated the recommendations from 2017 into the specific points that should be addressed by ICES EGs on diadromous fish before the RCG meeting in 2019, of which this is the third one
Follow-up actions needed	WGNAS and WGBAST to define the requirements for a river to be monitored for Atlantic salmon at regional level. Based on this, a list of the rivers to be monitored for the Atlantic salmon shall be forwarded to the RCG
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	WGNAS, WGBAST & RCG
Time frame (Deadline)	2018/2019

RCG NSEA 2018-R9 - WGBAST and WGNAS should work towards the implementation of RDBES database to store their primary data.	
Recommendation 9	The RCG recommends that WGBAST and WGNAS should work towards the implementation of RDBES database to store their primary data.
Justification	The RCG Diadromous SG noted that current awareness of the database is limited among potential end users. Therefore, the RCGRCG suggests that a formal approach to end-user groups should be made by the RCGRCG Chair to better inform them of the database, promote its benefits and request that they give detailed consideration to its use. In addition, ICES should also adopt a role in this regard, particularly as membership of such end user groups comprises both EU and non-EU participants. Because of this, non-EU members may be reluctant to participate in this initiative.
Follow-up actions needed	WGBAST and WGNAS to work towards the implementation of RDBES database to store their primary data.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	WGBAST, WGNAS, RCG
Time frame (Deadline)	2018/2019

RCG NSEA 2018-R10 - WGNAS and WGBAST to define for salmon stocks, which variables have to be collected, and advise on temporal frequency.	
Recommendation 10	The RCG recommends WGNAS and WGBAST suggest a selection of stocks from which salmon variables (juveniles, smolts, ascending adults) have to be collected, and advise on temporal frequency (annual or not) of the collection of variables for salmon.
Justification	<p>To cover the total data/information needs for stock assessment, the RCG has elaborated the recommendations from 2017 into the following specific points that should be addressed by ICES EGs on diadromous fish before the RCG meeting in 2019:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For commercial fisheries in Union waters, advise on the selection of stocks for which variables (sex-ratio, maturity, fecundity) have to be collected in support of scientific advice, and the temporal frequency and sampling level of data collection. 2. For commercial fisheries in fresh-, transitional-, and marine waters specify stock-related variables to be collected for individual specimens, on age, length, weight, sex, maturity and fecundity, by life stage. Noting that the requirement to collect annual catch quantities by age class or life stage is obligatory. 3. For recreational fisheries in all waters, advise on the end-user needs for age or other biological data, noting the requirement to collect annual volume (numbers and weights or length) of catches and releases is obligatory. 4. Define the rivers to be monitored for salmon at regional level, noting that 'rivers' in the Legal Text is interpreted to represent 'water bodies' (STECF 2017). In addition the criteria for river selection should be defined. 5. Coordinate, at regional level, the selection of stocks from which salmon variables (parr, smolts, ascending adults) have to be collected, and advise on temporal frequency (annual or not) of the collection of variables for salmon.
Follow-up actions needed	WGNAS & WGNAST need to coordinate, at regional level, the selection of stocks from which salmon variables have to be collected, and advise on temporal frequency of the collection of variables for salmon
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	WGNAS, WGBAST & RCG
Time frame (Deadline)	2018/2019

RCG NSEA 2018-R11 - Quality assurance salmon data	
Recommendation 11	The RCG recommends WGBAST and WGNAS to comment on current quality assurance in their data, and recommend actions to improve QA in future.
Justification	Quality assurance is closely linked to data collection. At the meeting the group discussed in plenary with the RCG NSEA on possibly working with WGBIOP (Working Group on Biological Parameters) on scale reading QA by WGBAST and WGNAS. In addition the group discussed the merit of intercalibration of electrofishing methods in the Baltic as this data is used for international stock assessment in contrast to the Atlantic area. The group however agreed that it would again be the end users of the data who should be consulted on QA of stock assessment data
Follow-up actions needed	WGBAST and WGNAS to comment on current quality assurance in their data, and recommend actions to improve QA in future.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	WGBAST, WGNAS & RCGs
Time frame (Deadline)	2018/2019

RCG NA 2018 – Agreements

RCG NA 2018-A1 - RCG NA merging with RCG NS EA and change of annual meeting structure	
When	Vigo, September 2018
What	The RCGNA agrees to merge with the RCG NS EA in 2019 and hold two joint annual meetings. A technical meeting in June is followed by a formal NC meeting in September to review/discuss proposals and reach agreements.
Who	Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherland, Portugal, Spain, UK,
Supporting Documentation	RCG NA 2018 report

RCG NA 2018-A2 - NA Rules of Procedures 2018	
When	Vigo, September 2018
What	The RCGNA agrees to roll over the Rules of Procedures drafted in Galway, September 2017 and revised intersessionally in December 2017. The existing Rules of Procedures will be reviewed when the RCGNA merges with the RCG NSEA in 2019.
Who	Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherland, Portugal, Spain, UK,
Supporting Documentation	Rules of Procedure in Annex of RCG NS&EA 2018 report

RCG NA 2018-A3 - RDB Steering Group Structure	
When	Vigo, September 2018
What	The RCGNA agrees to adopt the new RDB steering group structure with two representatives from the RCG NA - Dave Currie and Alastair Pout. RCG representation from the merged RCG will be reviewed in 2019.
Who	Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherland, Portugal, Spain, UK,
Supporting Documentation	RCG NS&EA 2018 report

RCG NA 2018-A4 - RDB Data Policy	
When	Vigo, September 2018
What	The RCGNA agrees to adopt the new RDB ES data policy as circulated to all NCs on Friday 31 August 2018
Who	Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherland, Portugal, Spain, UK,
Supporting Documentation	RCG NS&EA 2018 report

RCG NA 2018 - Recommendations

RCG NA 2018-R1 - Review and amendment of proposed control regulation to ensure DCF data requirements are met	
RCG NA 2018 Recommendation 1	The RCG NA recommends that the draft Control regulation is reviewed and amended where required to allow retention of personal data for more than 5 year for scientific purposes, to fulfil data requirements under the DCF.
Justification	<p>Articles 110, 111, 112, 113</p> <p>There are strong concerns about the stipulation that Personal data can only be retained for 5 years –under the GDPR there are allowable derogations from the normal Data Subject rights when data is used for scientific purposes.</p> <p>The proposed full anonymisation of VMS and log book data after 5 years will heavily restrict the utility of this data for the purpose of scientific analysis under the DCF.</p> <p>Time series of longer than five years are required for analysis and the provision of scientific advice to support the CFP.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<p>MS to coordinate review and comments on articles 110, 111, 112, 113 and amend where appropriate, to ensure full data functionality to implement DCF.</p> <p>MS to make coordinated submission during legislative negotiations based on review.</p>
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Com, Member States
Time frame (Deadline)	2018/2019

RCG NA 2018-R2 - Proposal for FishPi 2 WP 8 Training	
RCG NA 2018 Recommendation 2	The RCG NA recommends that FishPi 2 WP8 focusses training on the implementation of statistically sound sampling at two levels: At the technical level to support laboratories to progressively modify their existing sampling programme towards 4S; At the management level to introduce the concept, requirements and implications of 4S sampling to managers responsible of the implementation of the DCF.
Justification	Existing training programmes on statistical sound sampling focus on the theoretical aspects. Laboratories require applied training to evaluate their sampling programmes in relation to statistical robustness and to identify the necessary steps to evolve existing sampling programmes towards 4S. Improved background knowledge on the concept, requirements and implications of 4S sampling allows Managers responsible for the implementation of the DCF to make more informed decisions on resource allocation.
Follow-up actions needed	Training course to be developed under WP8 to cover recommended aspects.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	FishPi WP 8
Time frame (Deadline)	2018/2019

RCG NA 2018-R3 - Use and development of the Regional Database and Estimation System (RDBES).	
RCG NA 2018 Recommendation 3	The RCG NA recommends the development and use of the RDBES to store and analyse sampling data.
Justification	It has been recognised for many years that there was a need to have a new version of the Regional Database (RDB) – this new database is known as the Regional Database and Estimation System (RDBES) and is currently in development. The RDBES will accommodate upload of statistical sampling information and statistical estimations, as well as acting as a database. There are many benefit of the RDBES: It will support the Regional Coordination Groups with relevant sampling data for coordination Raise data quality by using common quality checks across all countries' data Ensure only approved standardised statistical methods are used for estimating data It is important that the RDBES have only approved estimation methods and it is transparent regarding the processing and estimation of data.
Follow-up actions needed	SCRDBES should steer the development and use of the RDBES and ensure MS are giving feedback about the development
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	SCRDBES
Time frame (Deadline)	2018

RCG NA 2018-R4 - Use of the RDBES to populate DCF National Report tables.
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RCG NA 2018 Recommendation 4	Evaluate the ability of the RDBES to populate the DCF National Report tables
Justification	<p>It would be beneficial for MS if as many of the DCF Annual Report tables can be automatically populated. The ability of the new RDBES to populate these tables will be investigated. For each table it should be discerned whether a) it can be populated using the proposed RDBES data format, b) it might be possible to populate the table with some modifications to the data format, or c) it will not be possible to populate the table.</p> <p>Where work to populate a table has already been started (e.g. populating Table 1A using Eurostat data) this should also be considered.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<p>Analysis of each table will be performed and the ability of the RDBES to populate it will be documented</p> <p>Any changes to the RDBES data format which will facilitate population will be considered</p>
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<p>Henrik Kjems-Nielsen will perform the initial analysis.</p> <p>SCRDBES to discuss at their next meeting in December</p>
Time frame (Deadline)	December 2018

RCG NA 2018-R5 - Funding of RDBES development	
RCG NA 2018 Recommendation 5	The RDBES is a key tool for RCGs to coordinate regional sampling and its further development should be continued.
Justification	<p>The RDBES is a key tool for RCGs to coordinate regional sampling. The European Commission currently pays for the maintenance and hosting of the RDB under an administrative agreement, but not for any development. ICES have provided 2 years funding to begin developing the RDBES, which is the successor to the existing RDB. However the development of the RDBES will not be completed during this time period so further funding for the development must be found.</p> <p>There are 3 sources that this funding could come from: 1) Direct funding from the European commission, 2) Funding from MS, 3) Funding from ICES. These funding sources aren't mutually exclusive and should all be investigated.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<p>ICES to provide a cost estimate for the remaining RDBES development work</p> <p>RCG to consider MS funding of RDB in conjunction with discussions about MS funding an RCG secretariat</p> <p>RCG NA to endorse the proposed pilot study from the RCG NS</p>
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Henrik Kjems-Nielsen will produce the cost estimates. RCG recommendations will be submitted to the Liaison meeting
Time frame (Deadline)	2018

RCG NA 2018-R6 - Storage and maintenance of metiers variables	
RCG NA 2018 Recommendation 6	A solution to the storage and maintenance of variables related to metiers is required. This needs to be a reference source that (1) end-users, the public and data managers and practitioners can access and refer to, and (2) RCGs can administer and keep updated and maintained.
Justification	<p>The Metiers workshop recommended that the list of approved métiers is maintained and publicly available at the ICES website, and that additionally a GitHub sharepoint be set up for other reference lists, documentation and Metier descriptions. However the procedures for creating, updating, and maintaining these lists and documents on an ongoing basis needs to be agreed.</p> <p>The ICES Data Centre should be approached and the RCGs can then work with them to define the solution. A key requirement is not the definition of a code list that never changes, but a list that can be maintained in a controlled way without becoming a burden.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<p>RCG Chairs to meet with ICES Data Centre to define a solution</p> <p>RCG Chairs to map the process, identify the resources and agree actions and deadlines.</p>
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG Chairs, ICES data centre.
Time frame (Deadline)	March 2018

RCG NA 2018-R7 - To endorse the need for multispecies data collection for marine recreational fisheries pilot surveys.	
RCG NA 2018 Recommendation 7	The RCG NA recommends that: marine recreational fisheries surveys collect data on all species caught rather than the solely species defined in the DCF.
Justification	Member states are interpreting the species requirements the pilot studies of marine recreational fisheries surveys differently. There is limited additional resource required to collect data on all species caught and it is not possible to assess the impact without data, so the RCG NA recommends that multispecies pilot surveys are done.
Follow-up actions needed	1. Clarification of the requirement for pilot studies is needed and proposal for inclusion of multispecies surveys in the revision of the DCF.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<p>RCG NA</p> <p>RCG NS</p> <p>WGRFS</p> <p>STECF</p>
Time frame (Deadline)	2019

RCG NA 2018-R8 - To agree means and processes for inclusion of marine recreational fisheries data into the RDBES.	
RCG NA 2018 Recommendation 8	The RCG NA recommends that: marine recreational fisheries data are included in the RDBES as soon as is practically possible. A proposal of a preferred option is needed that assesses the range of technical solutions, the associated resources, and impact on existing development. On this basis, an agreement of how to move forwards including timelines should be agreed by ICES.
Justification	<p>MRF data needs to be included in the RDBES as a matter of urgency to increase efficiency of uptake and use by end users. This is likely to become more of an issue over the coming years as MRF data are included in more stock assessments. The initial proposal of a simple approach of including raised estimates and a short assessment of quality of the data is not difficult to implement. This would be easily possible given the right priority in time for the 2019 data call, with a longer timescale for upload of historical data sets.</p> <p>The RCG NA supports the WGRFS recommendation. However, it is necessary to consider the potential technical solutions, associated resources, and impact on implementation of commercial fisheries data, before a solution can be agreed. The WGRFS, RCG NA and ICES Data Centre need to work closely together to develop this document. Funding can then be investigated and an implementation plan approved by ICES.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WGRFS to provide ICES Data Centre with the list of fields and values associated, along with user requirements by 21 September 2018. 2. ICES Data Centre to provide a document with potential options with associated costs and timescales for implementation by 1 October 2018. 3. ICES Data Centre and WGRFS to agree a solution and deliver a proposal to ICES by 14 October 2018. 4. ICES agreed way forwards for inclusion of marine recreational fisheries data in RDBES.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG NA RDBES SG WGRFS
Time frame (Deadline)	2018

RCG NA 2018-R9 - To support the need for further inclusion of recreational caught fish in stock assessments.	
RCG NA 2018 Recommendation 9	The RCG NA recommends that: the importance of recreational fisheries removals is reviewed and included in stock assessments where recreational catches are found to be large.
Justification	<p>Catches by recreational anglers can represent a significant proportion of the total removals. Marine recreational fisheries comprised of between 3 and 43% of removals of some key European fish stocks. Yet, recreational catches are only included in assessment for western Baltic cod, Northern and Biscay sea bass, and Baltic salmon. This may impact on managing fisheries towards sustainability targets like MSY.</p> <p>To ensure that marine recreational catches are included in appropriate assessments it is necessary to include in cod, sea bass and pollock stock assessment. In addition, it is important to embed recreational fisheries data in the benchmark process, so should be included in the data call and a justification for treatment of recreational fisheries included in the assessment report. Finally, as pilot studies are delivered, it would be prudent to have a STECF workshop to assess the impact of a broader ranges of stocks.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request ICES regional assessment groups include recreational catches for cod, sea bass, and pollock. 2. A process for embedding recreational fisheries in stock assessment should be developed by WGRFS to be include in ToRs for all benchmark assessments. 3. STECF to consider a workshop in September 2020 to review the impact of recreational fisheries based on the outcomes from pilot studies. A data call would be needed in advance of this workshop.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG NA RCG NS WGCSE WGNSSK WGBIE WGRFS STECF
Time frame (Deadline)	2019

RCG NA 2018-R10 - To review the role of regional cooperation for surveys of marine recreational fisheries in 2019.	
RCG NA 2018 Recommendation 10	The RCG NA recommends that: the potential for regional cooperation in marine recreational fisheries surveys is reviewed by WGRFS based on the outcomes of the regional cooperation projects FishPi2, STREAM, and SECFISH.
Justification	Regionalisation is central to deliver the CFP and is part of the EU MAP (2016/1251/EU). However, it is unclear how regionalisation should be implemented, so that European Commission have funded several projects to support delivery of regional cooperation that included a specific topic on recreational and small-scale fisheries. Four projects were funded three of which cover recreational fisheries biological and socio-economic data collection (FishPi2, SECFISH, & STREAM). These projects will report in May 2019, so it is important to review the outcomes from these projects and develop recommendations for regional cooperation in marine recreational fisheries survey. This should be done by survey experts at the WGRFS and passed to the RCGs for review.
Follow-up actions needed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WGRFS to review outcomes of regional cooperation project and propose potential options for regional cooperation in future surveys in June 2019. 2. RCG NA to review outcomes at the technical meeting in June 2019 and develop recommendations.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG NA RCG NS WGRFS
Time frame (Deadline)	2019

RCG Baltic 2018 -Agreements

RCG Baltic 2018-A1 - Suggestions for intersessional subgroups	
When	Lithuania, September 2018
What	RCG Baltic agrees to establish intersessional subgroups. Tasks for intersessional groups are defined in annex 2. Participants in each subgroup are suggested in RCG Baltic 2018 report. Names to be confirmed at the latest 28 September 2018. MS to plan for at least 1 week of work for each task / person.
Who	Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden
Supporting Documentation	RCG Baltic 2018 report

RCG Baltic 2018-A2 - Outcome of FishPi2	
When	Lithuania, September 2018
What	RCG Baltic agree that the outcome of FishPi2 WP1-WP8 will contribute to strengthen the regional coordination and will have impact on the development of RCG work. Outcome has to be considered in future work within the RCG.
Who	Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden
Supporting Documentation	RCG Baltic 2018 report

RCG Baltic 2018-A3 - Planning of work for EU-Map revision	
When	Lithuania, September 2018
What	RCG Baltic agree to request from the European Commission a timeline to be prepared regarding the revision of EU-MAP
Who	Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden
Supporting Documentation	RCG Baltic 2018 report

RCG Baltic 2018-A4 - Cost share of surveys	
When	Lithuania, September 2018
What	RCG Baltic agrees not to apply any cost sharing of surveys in the Baltic for 2019.
Who	NCs of Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden
Supporting Documentation	Annex in RCG Baltic 2018 report

RCG Baltic 2018-A5 - RDB steering group structure	
When	Lithuania, September 2018
What	The RCG Baltic agrees to adopt the new RDB steering group structure with two representatives from the RCG Baltic- Katja Ringdahl and Jörgen Dalskov. One representative from each ICES member countries are also allowed to participate.
Who	Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden
Supporting Documentation	RCG Baltic 2018 report

RCG Baltic 2018-A6 - RDB Data Policy #1	
When	Lithuania, September 2018
What	The RCG Baltic agrees to adopt the new RDB ES data policy as circulated to all NCs on the 31th August 2018.
Who	Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden
Supporting Documentation	RCG Baltic 2018 report

RCG Baltic 2018-A7 - RDB Data Policy #2	
When	Lithuania, September 2018
What	The NCs at the RCG Baltic 2018 agreed to grant ICES expert groups and related benchmark groups providing advice to fisheries management access to detailed data for the sub-division 22-32 (Baltic Sea) stored in the RDBES but only for the use by these groups
Who	Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden
Supporting Documentation	RCG Baltic 2018 report

RCG Baltic 2018-A8 - RDB upload of 2018 data – datacall with deadline 1 March 2019.	
When	Lithuania, September 2018
What	RCG Baltic agreed to prepare all steps of data to be able to upload the data collected in 2018 in March 2019, to make intersessional work and RCG meeting in June possible
Who	Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden
Supporting Documentation	RCG Baltic 2018 report

RCG Baltic 2018-A9 - Sampling of maturity data based on end user needs	
When	Lithuania, September 2018
What	RCG Baltic agreed that data on maturity sampled on surveys conducted in quarter 3 and 4 are not used in stock assessment due to wrong timing. According to the overview in Table 1 in annex, stocks that are currently sampled but not used are highlighted.
Who	Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden
Supporting Documentation	RCG Baltic 2018 report

RCG Baltic 2018 - Recommendations

RCG Baltic 2018-R1 -. Availability of last- haul data	
Recommendation 1	The RCG Baltic 2018 recommended that the last-haul data from the national control authorities (from the beginning until the end of 2018) should be provided to the National DCF Correspondents.
Justification	The last-haul data provide a unique data set, both with methodological strengths (e.g. no refusal, coverage, standardized data collection) and weaknesses (ad hoc sampling, no length distributions). However, it is an alternative data source that MS would like to explore and compare with the data collected within the DCF to evaluate its potential usefulness beyond control purposes (e.g. to supplement DCF samples, improve DCF data quality and hence, ICES fish stock assessments).
Follow-up actions needed	COM should forward this request to national control authorities which should make these data available to the National Correspondents. Alternatively, National Correspondents could approach their national fisheries control authority directly and convey the request for last-haul data of RCG Baltic.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Liaison meeting National Correspondents
Time frame (Deadline)	National last-haul data should be provided by the control authorities to the National Correspondents two months before the next RCG Baltic, i.e. latest in March 2019

RCG Baltic 2018-R2. Establish and finance a secretariat for supporting RCG work	
Recommendation 2	RCG Baltic agrees to request from the European Commission for them to explore financial possibilities, e.g. in the framework of the direct funding possibilities of the EMFF, to finance a joint secretary services for the disposal of the all-northern RCGs.
Justification	In order to make the regional work effective a secretary service was discussed. The RCG Baltic support this idea which is an outcome from FishPi2, WP1.
Follow-up actions needed	Build upon the final outcome from FishPi2, WP1.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Commission for finance aspects RCG Baltic to pick up outcome.
Time frame (Deadline)	RCG Baltic meeting June 2019

RCG Baltic 2018-R3 - Development of the Regional Database and Estimation System (RDBES).	
Recommendation 3	The RCG Baltic recommends the development and use of the RDBES to store and analyse sampling data
Justification	<p>The Regional Database and Estimation System (RDBES) is currently in development and will be the new version of the RDB. The RDBES will also store statistical sampling information and statistical estimations, as well as acting as a database. The RDBES will:</p> <p>support the Regional Coordination Groups with relevant sampling data for coordination</p> <p>Raise data quality by using common quality checks across all countries' data</p> <p>Ensure only approved standardised statistical methods are used for estimating data</p> <p>It is important that the RDBES have only approved estimation methods and it is transparent regarding the processing and estimation of data.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	SCRDB should steer the development and use of the RDBES and ensure MS are giving feedback about the development
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	SCRDB MS to follow the development and give input upon request
Time frame (Deadline)	2018

RCG Baltic 2018-R4 - Funding of RDBES development	
Recommendation 4	The RDBES is a key tool for RCGs to coordinate regional sampling and its further development should be continued.
Justification	<p>The RDBES is a key tool for RCGs to coordinate regional sampling. The European Commission currently pays for the maintenance and hosting of the RDB under an administrative agreement, but not for any development. ICES have provided 2 years funding to begin developing the RDBES, which is the successor to the existing RDB. However the development of the RDBES will not be completed during this time period so further funding for the development must be found.</p> <p>There are 3 sources that this funding could come from: 1) Direct funding from the European commission, 2) Funding from MS, 3) Funding from ICES. These funding sources aren't mutually exclusive and should all be investigated.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	ICES to provide a cost estimate for the remaining RDBES development work.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Henrik Kjems-Nielsen will produce the cost estimates. RCG recommendations will be submitted and discussed in the Liaison meeting.
Time frame (Deadline)	2018

RCG Baltic 2018-R5 - Review and amendment of proposed control regulation to ensure DCF data requirements are met	
Recommendation 5	The RCG Baltic recommends that the draft Control regulation is reviewed and amended where required to allow retention of personal data for more than 5 year for scientific purposes, to fulfil data requirements under the DCF.
Justification	<p>Articles 110, 111, 112, 113</p> <p>There are strong concerns about the stipulation that Personal data can only be retained for 5 years –under the GDPR there are allowable derogations from the normal Data Subject rights when data is used for scientific purposes.</p> <p>The proposed full anonymisation of VMS and log book data after 5 years will heavily restrict the utility of this data for the purpose of scientific analysis under the DCF.</p> <p>Time series of longer than five years are required for analysis and the provision of scientific advice to support the CFP.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<p>MS to coordinate review and comments on articles 110, 111, 112, 113 and amend where appropriate, to ensure full data functionality to implement DCF.</p> <p>MS to make coordinated submission during legislative negotiations based on review.</p>
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Com, Member States
Time frame (Deadline)	2018/2019

RCG Med&BS 2018 - Recommendations

RCG Med&BS 2018-R1 - Amendment of the Rules of procedure for the RCG Med&BS	
RCG MED&BS 2018 Recommendation 1	RCG MED&BS 2018 recommend the follow up of the amended draft text of the Rules of Procedure as attached to the RCG Med&BS report (Annex II), which was reviewed and discussed during a designated sub group and finally in the plenary of the meeting.
Justification	Article 9(5) of EU Regulation 2017/1004 of the EP and of the Council, <i>on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management, and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) 199/2008</i> (recast).
Follow-up actions needed	The amended draft text containing the agreed RoPs to be discussed at the LM. After LM, a draft text with comments from LM to be circulated to the NCs. When reviewed by the NCs, the final text can then be adopted by written procedure of the RoPs for MED&BS by the end of 2018.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	The chair of MED&BS 2018 will present the amended draft to LM. The Chair of RCG MED&BS 2018 will circulate the amended draft of the RoPs to all NCs.
Time frame (Deadline)	LM, end of 2018. NC

RCG Med&BS 2018-R2 - Establishment of Intersessional sub groups for the RCG Med&BS	
RCG MED&BS 2018 Recommendation 2	RCG MED&BS 2018 recommends the organization of an ad-hoc workshop on recreational fisheries, along with the creation of two Subgroups: one on Data requirements & data transmission issues and a second Subgroup on sampling stratification and optimization of biological data.
Justification	<p>Ad-hoc workshop on recreational fisheries: RCG considers that a subgroup on recreational fisheries already exists under the ICES umbrella (WGRFS), so there is no need to create another one. RCG recalls the work under implementation by GFCM on recreational fisheries and the handbook on data collection methodologies that will be finalized next year. However, RCG MED&BS considers that, according to EUMAP, MS shall provide catch estimates from existing recreational fishery surveys, including those carried out under the data collection framework or from an additional pilot study, by the end of 2018. These surveys shall allow assessment of the share of catches from recreational fisheries in relation to commercial catches for all species in a marine region for which recreational catch estimates are required under this multiannual Union programme. EUMAP also requires that the subsequent design and extent of national surveys of recreational fisheries, including any thresholds for data collection, shall be coordinated at marine region level and shall be based on end-user needs. Therefore, RCG MED&BS recommends to organize an ad-hoc workshop on recreational fisheries.</p> <p>Data transmission issues: RCG considers the need to establish a permanent subgroup on data requirements and data related regional specificities and issues by end users. The aim of this subgroup is to try to streamline and simplify the process of data transmissions to end-users in order to avoid duplication of reporting of the same type of data. In addition, the sub group should assess DT failures before submission to MS.</p> <p>Sampling stratification and optimization of biological data: RCG agrees on the need to set up a network of experts to be trained on statistical tools and R packages on sampling stratification and optimization of biological data. Several interesting tools are being implemented under the STREAM project and two working groups have already been organized by the STREAM project to finalize the tools. The network should enable the use of the tool at a regional level and each MS should nominate experts to be part of the network.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<p>Ad-hoc workshop on recreational fisheries: Review of pilot studies implemented in EU MED&BS MS, Presentation of the outcomes of the STREAM project, Assessment of the share of catches from recreational fisheries in relation to commercial catches for all species in the Mediterranean and in Black Sea, Design of national surveys of recreational fisheries, including list of species and thresholds for data collection for the future EUMAP (2020 and onwards)</p> <p>Data transmission issues: The first meeting of the subgroup will be convened in January 2019. RCG considers that, apart from experts nominated by each MS, main end users (STECF/JRC, GFCM) and Commission should participate.</p> <p>Sampling stratification and optimization of biological data: The network should work in the following months in order to provide final results for presentation and discussion in the next RCG MED&BS 2019.</p>
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<p>Ad-hoc workshop on recreational fisheries: To be decided</p> <p>Data transmission issues: Ivana Vukov will coordinate this sub group.</p> <p>Sampling stratification and optimization of biological data: To be decided</p>
Time frame (Deadline)	<p>Ad-hoc workshop on recreational fisheries: The workshop is planned for the second week of April 2019, Italy.</p> <p>Data transmission issues: Continuous work during the year will provide results for presentation and discussion for RCG MED&BS 2019.</p> <p>Sampling stratification and optimization of biological data: The network should work in the following months in order to provide final results for presentation and discussion in the next RCG MED&BS 2019.</p>

RCG Med&BS 2018-R3 - Setting up of a Regional Database for the RCG Med&BS	
RCG MED&BS 2018 Recommendation 3	RCG Med&BS 2018 considers the development of a regional database as an urgent priority in order to allow for the efficient use of the data received from the official RCG data calls and avoid duplication of work.
Justification	<p>Article 9(3) of EU Regulation 2017/1004 of the EP and of the Council, on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management, and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) 199/2008 (recast).</p> <p><i>“Regional coordination groups shall aim at developing and implementing procedures, methods, quality assurance and quality control for collecting and processing data with a view to enabling the reliability of scientific advice to be further improved. For that purpose, regional coordination groups shall aim to develop and implement regional databases.”</i></p>
Follow-up actions needed	<p>NCs will send the two relevant nominations for the Steering Committee (SC) by 10th of October.</p> <p>The SC will convene before the end of 1018 and finalise a roadmap on issues concerning the RDB. Issues to be decided on: Agreement on the level of disaggregation (proposal for submission of anonymised raw data), the legal framework, the best option on who will host, funding opportunities for the maintenance, storage and operational costs,</p>
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<p>NCs will send the two nominations for the SC within two weeks from the RCG MED & BS 2018.</p> <p>Eirini Mantzouni, Researcher from the Fisheries Research Institute, will act as preliminary chair until the formation of the SC. The SC will then decide upon its final Chair. The Chair of the SC will draft a roadmap of following actions to be performed in order to form the RDB of MED & BS.</p>
Time frame (Deadline)	LM, end of 2019. NC

RCG Med&BS 2018-R4 - Mesozooplankton sampling in MEDIAS surveys	
RCG Med & BS 2018 Recommendation 4	RCM Med&BS-LP 2016 recommends a sampling on mesozooplankton to be planned and carried out in MEDIAS framework
Justification	The RCM Med&BS-LP considered that the development of a plankton sampling during MEDIAS surveys would be useful in order to have an index of productivity to be associated to small pelagic fish biomass and its spatial distribution. This information is valid as an ecosystem indicator for MSFD, but also as ground truth of acoustic non-target organisms. In addition, plankton sampling will provide new information on pelagic ecosystem, eventually useful for future ecosystem based management (EBM). The ichthyoplankton fraction of the collected samples could give more information on anchovy (given the survey period) spawning and nursery areas.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Commission, Liaison Meeting, MS
Time frame (Deadline)	Sampling – during MEDIAS surveys

RCG LP 2018 - Recommendations

RCG LP 2018-R1 - Bluefin tuna age data	
RCG LP 2018 Recommendation	Promote within ICCAT regular workshops for Bluefin Tuna age reading and calibration
Justification	ICCAT has a panel of experts handling Bluefin Tuna (BFT) preparation and reading of har structures (spines and otoliths). If DG MARE requests that each MS collects age data from BFT it would make sense to have the methods coordinated at the EU level but in agreement with current state-of-the-art.
Follow-up actions needed	Contact ICCAT Secretariat
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	DG MARE, RCG-LP
Time frame (Deadline)	Before 31 December 2019

PGECON 2018 – Agreements

PGECON 2018-A1 – New AR templates	
When	During the next SIM meetings
What	PGECON has contributed and should continue to have a key role in developing guidance for data quality regarding data collection methodologies. This could be for the basis of a future SIM workshop.
Who	PGECON
Supporting Documentation	PGECON 2018 report – Tor 4

PGECON 2018-A2 – STECF updates and SECFISH	
When	EAFE conference 23-25 April 2019
What	Under SECFISH WP6 - There was also a suggestion put forward that a special session on EU-MAP socio-economic variable data collection could be planned for the EAFE conference 23-25 April 2019. This was agreed by most MS.
Who	EAFE
Supporting Documentation	PGECON 2018 report – Tor 6

PGECON 2018-A3 – PGECON calendar 2018 - 19	
When	PGECON 2019
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PGECON 2019 will be held in Slovenia 13th-17th May of 2019. • PGECON 2019 should include a ToR on Aquaculture with specific reference on the land locked MS and a ToR on recreational catch data. • A Workshop on the Socio-Economic data call structure will be organized before the end of 2018 with JRC in attendance. Provisional time is late November in Athens. • A second workshop to reassess Capital Value estimations and PIM is planned for the first quarter of 2019. The venue is to be decided.
Who	PGECON
Supporting Documentation	PGECON 2018 report – Tor 7

PGECON 2018 – Recommendations

PGECON 2018-R1 - SIM – Update on capital value estimation methods	
PGECON 2018 Recommendation	<p>PGECON 2018 recommends to carry out a Capital Value Workshop with the aim to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present and discuss MS experiences in approaches and results from estimating fleet capital value and calculation of capital costs through PIM and alternative methods. 2. Compare price per capacity unit applied by different MS and assumptions made on the PIM method (age schedules, depreciation schemes, depreciation rates, etc.). 3. Compare Economic analysis resulting from the use of different assumptions.
Justification	Follow-up on ToR 1 PGECON 2018
Follow-up actions needed	To carry out workshop
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	PGECON and WS chairs
Time frame (Deadline)	2019

PGECON 2018-R2-4 - PGECON Governance and Rules of Procedure	
PGECON 2018 Recommendation	<p>[R2] PGECON recommends that MS should indicate their position regarding the future of PGECON legal status (continuation of PGECON as subgroup of the Commission Expert Working Group on data collection or its evolution into an RCG). MS should discuss these options within their National coordination meetings or in another suitable scenario. Feedback from each MS should be addressed to PGECON chairs before the end of 2018 while the future PGECON Status will be confirmed at the next NC meeting..</p> <p>[R3] Further consultation with MS needs to take place before a decision can be made on future status of PGECON. For consultation, PGECON 2018 should provide summary of the above options and communicate to every MS National Correspondents regarding the aim and main points of changing status. First information on changing PGECON status should reach MS by SECFISH WP1 questionnaire.</p> <p>[R4] Regardless of whether PGECON becomes an RCG or remains a subgroup of the Commission Expert Working Group on data collection, it is recommended to develop rules of procedure covering a description of working methods and decision-making processes as well as general governance aspects, for example, on the election of chairs and follow up of recommendations.</p>
Justification	Follow-up on ToR 2 PGECON 2018
Follow-up actions needed	Address feedback to PGECON chairs, preparation of PGECON RoP
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS;PGECON
Time frame (Deadline)	End of 2018, for MS feedback, PGECON 2019 for RoP

PGECON 2018-R5 – Follow up on Workshop on activity levels	
PGECON 2018 Recommendation	PGECON recommends that the minimum wage could be used as a threshold to allow a distinction between active and less active vessels and in case the minimum wage is not available, the theoretical estimated value could be used (see also appendix). Alternatively, the indicator of at-risk-of-poverty can be used as it is available for all MS. In specific cases where a threshold is already used, it could be discussed whether this threshold could be included.
Justification	Follow-up on ToR 3 of PGECON 2018
Follow-up actions needed	To use threshold only for analysis
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	STECF EWG
Time frame (Deadline)	Not determined

PGECON 2018-R6-9 – Follow up on Workshop on Small Scale Fisheries	
PGECON 2018 Recommendation	<p>[R6] PGECON recommends that when balance sheets are available, the total value of assets and value of long/short debts have to be split by vessel, according to the capital value of each vessel estimated through the PIM which is used to “weight” the share on the total value</p> <p>[R7] In case balance sheets are not available, estimation methodology of value of capital and value of debts have to be in line and derived from the PIM. In particular, the value of long/short term debts can be estimated by multiplying the financial position ratio by the value of assets.</p> <p>[R8] For the small scale fleet vessels less than 10 meters, it could be assumed that 1 Day at Sea is equivalent to 1 Fishing Day as far as no other data contradicts this hypothesis. Nevertheless, this assumption has to be assessed regionally by fishery, as significant differences can occur between them</p> <p>[R9] People working only onshore and paid from vessels should be included if their activity has a direct link with the fishing operations. Employment on shore should include those activities, which directly related to small scale fisheries and mostly carried out by fishermen and their family members, but not entirely related to other economic sectors and specialties</p>
Justification	Follow-up on ToR 3 of PGECON 2018
Follow-up actions needed	MS to apply recommendation in data collection and include in WP with next planned resubmission
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS
Time frame (Deadline)	Application from 2019

PGECON 2018-R10-13 – SIM data collection of fish processing	
PGECON 2018 Recommendation	<p>[R10] For the segments with “main” fish processing activities, “Turnover” variable, should include only Turnover related to the principal fish processing activity.</p> <p>[R11] Under “Other income” all the other revenues from other activities apart from fish processing should be provided.</p> <p>[R12] To adapt, as soon as possible, the variables table and the related definition on the DCF website, in order to provide MS with updated guidelines.</p> <p>[R13] For JRC, in future data calls, to ask MS to include comments when submitting data, to indicate if turnover is TOTAL turnover.</p>
Justification	Follow-up on ToR 5 of PGECON 2018
Follow-up actions needed	<p>MS to apply recommendation in data collection and include in WP with next planned resubmission</p> <p>JRC to ensure the follow-up of recommendations 12 and 13</p>
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS, JRC
Time frame (Deadline)	From 2019

PGECON 2018-R14 – STECF updates and SECFISH	
PGECON 2018 Recommendation	<p>Under SECFISH WP1 - There needs to be an updated the section in the questionnaire on the rules of procedure of PGECON and on the status of PGECON. It was suggested that text, drafted between PGECON chairs, SecFish and DG MARE, should be included which would provide information on the background of the question about converting PGECON into an RCG so that respondents and MS can make a better informed decision when answering the question of PGECON status.</p> <p>Under SECFISH WP5 - It was concluded that the variables/information presented in the questionnaire should be available at the enterprise level due to the rules and regulations in EU on traceability of fish products all through the value chain. It was also pointed out that even though that all this information is available at the enterprise level it can be difficult to get access to this information and it will probably be very time consuming for the enterprises to report the detailed information. The question of confidentiality was also raised and it should be kept in mind if the data is collected and stored. DG Mare is currently putting forward suggestions to EUROSTAT to expand the Combined Nomenclature regarding fish product on the CN 8 number level, so more species can be identified using this code. The main argument for collecting these data have been that it would enable an assessment of local and regional dependency of the fish processing sector on local and regional fisheries or aquaculture sectors.</p> <p>Under SECFISH WP6 - It was agreed that PGECON should advise JRC on appropriate reporting structure for social data to be included in the data call. PGECON recommends organizing a Workshop to discuss and agree appropriate reporting structure for social data. It was agreed that such a Workshop should take place before data call is issued. Topics to discuss at the Workshop could include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How data is intended to be analyzed and presented. 2. Agreement on methods to raise data from sample to the whole population. <p>Discussion and advice to MARE and JRC in view of preparing the structure for the 2019 data call as regards social data</p>
Justification	Follow-up on ToR 6 of PGECON 2018
Follow-up actions needed	To take into account in SECFISH implementation
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	SECFISH
Time frame (Deadline)	Not determined

Liaison Meeting 2018 – Recommendations

LM 2018-R1– Addition of species for the revision of the EU-MAP Regulation tables	
LM 2018 Recommendation	Shortfin mako shark and Porbeagle to be included in future table 1C for the tuna RFMOs areas. These are two high priority for RFMOs.
Justification	These are two high priority species for the tuna RFMOs
Follow-up actions needed	STECF
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	
Time frame (Deadline)	2019

ANNEX 2 – List of Inter-Sessional Sub-Groups (ISSG)

The participation of experts from MS in the following ISSG was still under development at the time of finalizing the LM report. In consequence, the ticks in MS participation for each of the ISSG are preliminary information at this stage.

ISSG on Development of Draft Regional work plan

Subgroup heading	ISSG on Development of Draft Regional work plan															Panregional or regional	
Governance	1. To draft a regional work plan with limited elements covering the aspects of procedures, methods, quality assurance and quality control for collecting and processing of data and regionally coordinated sampling strategies. 2. To develop the format and content for proposed submission for the following work plan elements as identified during the RCGNA 2018 annual meeting and including the following: a) Procedures: Page of eligible meetings and participation by Member State; List of subgroups and their intersessional tasks in the same table below. b) Methods: Standardised sampling methods for the freezer trawler fleet on small pelagics c) Quality Assurance: + Control: RDBES Quality assurance, SISP for surveys, documentation. d) Cost sharing of surveys: Surveys already going into cost sharing agreement: Blue whiting for the North Atlantic Region.															Panregional	
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK	COM
	France																

ISSG on the revision of EU-MAP

Subgroup heading	ISSG on Revision of EU-MAP															Panregional or regional	
Governance	1. To review current EUMAP legislation and propose required amendments for EUMAP 2020 and beyond with particular focus on issues relating to regional coordination; 2. To review tables and propose amendments where required 3. To consider the overlap between PGECON and RCGs and identify crosscutting issues.															Panregional	
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK	COM
	Denmark	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	

ISSG on Implication of the Landing Obligation

Subgroup heading	ISSG on Implication of the Landing Obligation															Panregional or regional	
Implication of management measures on data collection	1. Evaluate the implication of the landing obligation on national and regional catch sampling programmes o Consider providing simple metrics for demonstrating any impact. 2. Review and analyse 2018 BMS CS and CL data on the RDB and source and review other available metrics (e.g. refusal rates) o Investigate how complete the BMS data is in the RDB. Have codification issues caused errors, can data be uploaded again with correct fractions if present? o Compare data with the FDI data regarding BMS landings 3. Review ToRs & outcomes of WGCATCH 2018 4. Explore other data sources to evaluate the implication of the landings obligation such as last haul data from control agencies and studies on observer effect. o Review and maintain a catalogue of any ongoing analysis and exemptions. 5. Provide recommendations on how to improve data collection and data quality of the BMS fraction and increase the availability of BMS data in the RDB. Present these recommendations to the next RCG plenary. 6. Explore to what extent MS are applying exemptions (i.e. high survivability and de minimis)															Panregional	
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK	COM
	Netherlands/Ireland			✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		TBD		✓		

ISSG on Development of code tools

Subgroup heading	ISSG on Development of code tools																Panregional or regional
Implication of management measures on data collection	Develop / continue to develop codes tools, based on other data sources than the RDB, to support harmonization in reporting to COM, across MS High Priority: 2018-19 Finalize the code for table 1A (National Workplan), test the code and make it available. Lower Priority : Ongoing- Develop other tools based on the existing RDB format to compile tables / parts of tables for different reports (e.g. National Workplans, Annual Reports) to ease the burden of the MS. 1. Identify tables in the National Workplans and Annual Reports that can be populated with information and meta data from the present RDB. 2. Develop scripts for routine extraction and compilation of such information and meta data into the relevant tables.																Panregional
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK	COM
	France		✓			✓				✓	✓				✓		

ISSG on Metier Issues

Subgroup heading	ISSG on Metier Issues																Panregional or regional
Implication of management measures on data collection	High Priority 2018-19 Metier issues 1. To facilitate harmonization of métier assignment, set up and manage a public repository for storing reference lists, documentation of procedures, scripts related to assigning métiers to transversal data as well as métier descriptions. Make sure that it is possible to link this platform with a future website. 2. Initiate and collect documentation of logic applied by MS to assign métiers 3. Make metier descriptions based on template. 4. Agree on a reference list of species grouped into species groups. 5. Clean up the metier lists. Remove overlapping metiers and standardize the codes. 6. Make a script for a standard procedure for assigning metiers based on a common data format, taking into account the recommendations made at the Metier workshop. 7. Test effort calculation method agreed in the WKTRANSVERSAL in Nicosia for the RDB SE table. 8. Test impact of change of measure to determine target assemblage (to value of landings).																Panregional
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK	COM
	Denmark		✓		✓		✓			✓	✓		✓		✓		

ISSG on quality assurance of data and sampling programmes

Subgroup heading	ISSG on quality assurance of data and sampling programmes																Panregional or regional
Implication of management measures on data collection	Facilitate quality assurance of data and sampling programmes 1. Compile table 5A in the national work plans for all the MS in the region and evaluate the overall documentation on quality of sampling programmes in the region using table 5A. 2. Develop indicators to monitor overall progress (based on table 5A) on quality assurance in the region over time. 3. Collate relevant tools developed for quality control and quality assurance in data collection developed by other groups and projects (e.g. fishPi2 WP6, ICES WGCATCH, BIOPTIM) and make plans (including accessibility, storage and training) for how these can be integrated in regional work and how MS can be supported to integrate them in national work. 4. Compile uploads logs retrieved through the RCG data call and prepare feedback to MS on data anomalies.																Panregional
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK	COM
	Ireland																

ISSG on End-Users and RCGs

Subgroup heading	ISSG on End-Users and RCGs															Panregional or regional	
End-users and RCGs	Task 1. Review and streamline dialogue between data providers (RCGs) and Endusers (ICES) in order to identify effective processes to meet enduser needs and allow the RCG to prioritise its activity relating to future data collection, storage and transmission functions. Processes to focus on: a) STECF mandatory survey list b) Benchmark process															Panregional	
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK	COM
	Denmark UK		✓			TBD					✓		TBD		✓		

ISSG on Regional Sampling plan for Diadromous fishes

Subgroup heading	ISSG on Regional Sampling plan for Diadromous fishes															Panregional or regional	
Diadromous Fishes	1. The overall task is to progress development of the regional work/sampling plans for data collection and quality assurance. This will be achieved through the following tasks: 1.1 Working with RCGs, explain what these regional work/sampling plans should achieve and what they should contain (and why they are beneficial to the Member States for eels, salmon and sea trout). 1.2 Make recommendations on (fisheries and fishery-independent) data needs for the regional work/sampling plans, considering the tables of data needs drafted by RCGs 2018 and then updated by ICES expert working groups. 1.3 Support the expert working groups in determining the effect of (fisheries and fishery-independent) data quality issues on their assessments, and make recommendations for addressing issues via the regional work/sampling plans. (Additional detail: consider the Member State descriptions of their quality assurance schemes and statistically sound sampling schemes for data collection) 1.4 Work with the end-users and the RDBES developers to make best use of the RDBES for developing and implementing regional work/sampling plans. (Additional detail: work within the RDBES steering group). 1.5 Define the rivers to be monitored for eel and salmon at regional level. (Additional detail: this will be based on the information provided by Member States to explain how they have selected their index rivers, but there is a question of how to ask the MS for this information?). 2. In addition: 2.1 Make recommendations on how to address any (fisheries and fishery-independent) data transmission issues reported by the end-users. 2.2 Make recommendations for the revision of the EU MAP based on end-user requirements. (Additional detail: work within the sub-group for EU MAP revision).															Panregional Regional	
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK	COM
	UK/UK																

ISSG on RDB Core Group

Subgroup heading	ISSG on RDB Core Group															Panregional or regional	
Regional database	Group to provide practical input, advice and guidance for ICES during development of the new RDBES.															Panregional	
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK	COM
	ICES		✓			TBD							✓		✓		

ISSG on SCRDBES

Subgroup heading	ISSG on SCRDBES																Panregional or regional	
Regional database	<p>The aims of the Regional Database and Estimation System (RDBES) are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To ensure that data can be made available for the coordination of regional fisheries data sampling plans, including for the EU Data Collection Framework (DCF) Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs), 2) To provide a regional estimation system such that statistical estimates of quantities of interest can be produced from sample data, 3) To serve and facilitate the production of fisheries management advice and status reports, 4) To increase the awareness of fisheries data collected by the users of the RDBES and the overall usage of these data. <p>The use of the data held in the RDBES is regulated by the RDBES Data Policy .</p> <p>The RDBES is overseen by a steering committee – the SCRDBES. The SCRDBES is responsible for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Strategic Planning, b) Data and Technical Governance, c) Prioritisation of work, d) Cost estimations e) Promotion of the RDBES, f) Overseeing the RDBES's operational effectiveness. 																Panregional	
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK		COM
	Sweden Ireland		✓												✓			

ISSG on Generic issues for Regional Sampling Plans

Subgroup heading	ISSG on Generic issues for Regional Sampling Plans																Panregional or regional	
Regional Sampling Plans	<p>Generic tasks - dependent on FishPI2 outcome, no tasks specific for 2018/2019</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Generate national and regional overviews of fisheries, namely including aspects as spatial and temporal distribution of fishing effort and landings of relevant stocks, landing sites, gear types and fleets/meters; 2. Provide overview of sampling data currently collected at regional level and compare/contrast with data needs through consultation with endusers (stock coordinators); 3. Agreement and selection of fisheries/species/variables to be included in a regional sampling plan based on agreed selection criteria; 4. Collate description of national sampling programmes relating to the selected fisheries, including overviews of sampling protocol and sampling intensities; 5. Review and agree on appropriate tools/methods to adopt for RSP development and implementation incorporating relevant outcomes from FishPI1 and FishPI2. These should consider the following aspects: 6. Develop statistical sound sampling design on a regional basis; 7. Incorporate national and regional constraints and agree on the degree of deviation. 8. Agree on the metrics (e.g. precision estimators) that should be chosen to evaluate the optimal sampling design at regional level. 9. Develop statistical tools to be part of the quality assurance framework (e.g. COST detection of outliers); 10. Implement processes of data flow and management; 11. Practical implementation and logistical constraints; 12. Review and monitoring process for the RSPs. 13. Provide guidance to the SC-RDB on data requirements within the structure of the RDB to support the development of RSPs. 																Panregional	
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK		COM
					✓	✓							✓		✓			

ISSG on Risk Assessment for by-catch in the North Atlantic

Subgroup heading	ISSG on Risk Assessment for by-catch in the North Atlantic															Panregional or regional	
Regional Sampling Plans	Update of Risk Assessment for bycatch in the North Atlantic 1. Update bycatch risk assessment for the North Atlantic 2. Contrast with fisheries overviews from RDB, 3. Review NA Pilot studies for bycatch to identify existing additional monitoring 4. Identify gaps in monitoring coverage of high risk fisheries															Regional NA	
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK	COM
	Spain Ireland			✓					✓			✓					

ISSG on Regional Sampling Plan fo freezer trawlers exploiting small pelagic fish in the NorthWest Atlantic

Subgroup heading	ISSG on Regional Sampling Plan fo freezer trawlers exploiting small pelagic fish in the NorthWest Atlantic															Panregional or regional	
Regional Sampling Plans	Towards a regional sampling plan for the freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic 1. Scope and issue a data call in support of intersessional analysis of freezer trawler fishing activity and historical catch sampling conducted for stock assessment by the relevant nations. 2. Conduct an analysis of the freezer trawler fleet behaviour and evaluate the potential suitability for a regional sampling plan 3. Carry out a workshop to consider project outputs and further develop methodologies for the evaluation of regionally coordinated sampling schemes for the freezer trawler fleet.															Regional NA	
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK	COM
	Germany Ireland						✓	✓	✓			✓					(*)

ISSG on Regional Sampling Plan for small pelagics in the Baltic

Subgroup heading	ISSG on Regional Sampling Plan for small pelagics in the Baltic															Panregional or regional	
Regional Sampling Plans	Towards a regional sampling programme – Case study of fisheries for small pelagics in the Baltic 1. Generate regional and national overviews of fisheries. These should include spatial and temporal distribution of fishing effort and landings of relevant stocks, landing sites, gear types, information on fleets etc. 2. Generate description of present national sampling programmes, including overviews of sampling protocol and sampling intensities 3. Generate overview of data that is collected on the regional level 4. Identify what commercial data ICES AWG need for these stocks. If relevant meet up with relevant stock coordinators and assessors at appropriate meeting. 5. Compare data presently collected with data needed by the AWG. Identify gaps and data presently collected but not used 6. Propose a regional sampling design. The design shall take end-user needs, statistical principles and logistical constraints into account 7. Suggest sampling responsibilities for the different countries participating in the programme 8. Suggest common sampling protocol 9. Suggest sampling protocol 10. Suggest proper sampling sizes for age, weight and length 11. Suggest if and when maturity data need to be collected from commercial samples 12. Suggest if other types of data (e.g. scales, genetics, parasites) shall be collected 13. Suggest how data (samples and transversal data) shall be stored and exchanged 14. Identify responsibilities between the countries on the generation of estimates and transmission of data to end-users															Regional Baltic	
	Chair	BEL	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GER	IRE	LAT	LIT	NL	POL	POR	SWE	UK	COM
	Denmark; Sweden		✓		✓	✓							✓		✓		