



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Directorate C: Fisheries Policy Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic and Outermost
Regions Unit C3: Scientific Advice and Data Collection

Call MARE/2020/08 – **FIHNS'CO** – **SI2.839816**

Strengthening EU-MAP data collection by developing
Regional Work Plans for the Regional Coordination
Groups (RCG) NANS&EA, Baltic and Large Pelagics, and
Economics Issues

FISHN'CO

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

Final Report



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Table of contents

1. Summary.....	4
2. Background.....	5
2.1. Genesis of Regional Work Plan	5
2.2. Fishn’Co initial work	6
2.3. STECF feedbacks	6
3. Preparing the ground for an official RWP 2025-2027	7
3.1. Consultation to National Correspondents	7
4. Strategy for implementation of the RWP 2025-2027	8
4.1. Timeline.....	8
4.2. Format	9
4.3. Linkage between NWP and RWP.....	9
4.4. Content	10
5. Organisational aspects.....	17
5.1. Timeline and procedure for adoption of a RWP.....	17
5.2. Revised RoP that accommodates for development and adoption of RWP	17
6. Communication and dissemination	18
6.1. Detailed dissemination and communication plan (DCP) for the RCGs	18
6.2. Permanent update of the Stakeholders database for the RWP	18
6.3. Specific communication and dissemination contents and materials	19
6.4. Stakeholder events and networking	19
7. Lessons learned and ways forward	19
7.1. Fishn’Co experience.....	19
7.2. Ways forward.....	20
8. Acknowledgements.....	21
9. References.....	21
ANNEX I – Project objectives.....	22
ANNEX II - Project Deliverables.....	24
ANNEX III - Budget.....	27

1. Summary

The Fishn'Co project, developing Regional Work Plans (RWP) for the Regional Coordination Groups (RCG) NANSEA, RCG Baltic, RCG Large Pelagics and RCG on Economics Issues, operated from January 2021 to February 2023. It brought together 13 institutes from 11 EU Member States and various experts, often chairs or leaders of RCGs and intersessional subgroups (ISSG). The project added value to the RCGs and ISSGs, complementing their work on Regional Work Plans covering thematic areas of the EU multiannual data collection programme (EU-MAP, EU Reg 2017/1004, Commission Delegated Decision 2021/1167 and Commission Implementing Decision 2021/1168). The detailed project objectives are given in Annex I and the incurred budget in Annex III.

The project was carried out in a transparent way, in consultation with data collection stakeholders such as National Correspondents (NC), Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), RCGs and EU Commission for engaging all parties into the development of the new concept which are Regional Work Plans for the considered RCGs.

During 2021, Fishn'Co Work Package 1 liaised with all relevant ISSGs to identify their objectives, ambitions, and existing gaps in the activities of coordination. This exercise helped to harmonise the activities descriptions in 13 thematic areas. Work Package 4 presented all ambitions and their state of play in [infographics](#), now published on the RCGs' website. Work Package 2 developed a decision-making process for the RWPs, and Work Package 3 proposed format and identified elements of coordination to put forward in a Regional Work Plan. After 6 months of work, Fishn'Co presented the results to 2021 RCGs' technical meetings which led to two non-binding test RWPs proposed for the year 2022 by RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic.

In the second phase from October 2021 until end February 2023, Fishn'Co focused on developing the final RWP proposals, based on the experiences and lessons learned from the first phase. Indeed, main feedback on the test RWPs from the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) was a general appreciation and a recommendation to focus on developing 2025-2027 RWPs as soon as 2023, so that MS involved in RWPs have time to reflect the corresponding RWP in their own 2025-2027 national work plans (NWP), to be prepared by mid-October 2024. To take up the challenge, Fishn'Co set up a large consultation to all NCs on all aspects of RWPs to prepare the discussions during the 2022 RCG technical meetings. The consultation proved to be very successful, 24 out of 26 MS responded fully with valuable comments and suggestions.

In 2022 the RCGs approved the need to develop 2025-2027 RWP by both Fishn'Co and Streamline (twin project for the RCG Med&Black Sea) and recommended to revive the ISSG on Developing Regional Work Plan (ISSG RWP) for presentation in 2023 RCG technical meetings. Fishn'Co presented four RWPs to the EU Commission and NCs on a dedicated meeting in early March 2023 and handed them over to ISSG RWP on 21 March 2023; the RWP on Economics Issues was mature enough to be approved as is in 2023 RCG ECON technical meeting.

All planned deliverables (Annex II) were developed, although Covid-19 travel restrictions affected the coordination of activities and linkage to and between ISSGs. Fortunately, one in-person meeting could be held in Vigo in October 2022 to prepare all final deliverables, which contributed to the project's success in handing over all planned RWPs.

In terms of communication and dissemination, Fishn'Co held 7 virtual plenary meetings, presentations to RCG NANSEA, RCG Baltic, RCG Large Pelagics and RCG ECON during their sessions of 2021 and 2022. Fishn'Co worked closely with the Streamline project for the development of a Mediterranean and Black Sea RWP, and with the SecWeb project, to develop [ad hoc pages](#) within the [RCGs website](#) and hosting public materials to better understand and promote the work done in RCGs related to RWP (interviews, video, leaflet, infographics, etc.).

2. Background

2.1. Genesis of Regional Work Plan

2.1.1. Legal Basis

The first reference to Regional Work Plan (RWP) appears in Article 9 of the Regulation EU 2017/1004. This article specifies that *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* (article 1). The following articles refer to the setting of Regional Coordination Groups (RCG) and the RWP comes in paragraph 8: *Regional coordination groups may prepare draft regional work plans, which shall be compatible with this Regulation and with the multiannual Union programme. Those draft regional work plans may include procedures, methods, quality assurance and quality control for collecting and processing data [...], regionally coordinated sampling strategies and conditions for delivery of data in regional databases. They may also contain cost-sharing arrangements for participation in research surveys at sea.* Then, in paragraph 10, it is specified that *a regional work plan shall be considered to replace or supplement the relevant parts of the national work plans of each of the Member States concerned.*

Stemming from the Regulation (EU 2017/1004) as a brand-new concept, Regional Work Plans took time to take shape and contents.

2.1.2. FishPi2 first reflexions

As soon as 2017, the project FishPi²⁽¹⁾ was tasked in its Work Package 1 to make suggestions on the desired aspects of the new Regional Coordination Groups (RCG) replacing the Regional Coordination Meetings (RCM). The objectives identified included the development and establishment of regional workplans and regional sampling plans, end-user driven data collection and transparent quality assurance and assessment of collected data. In FishPi², there was then the first description of Regional Sampling Plans presented as building blocks of Regional Work Plans. These were seen as welcome clarification on both concepts.

2.1.3. RCG NANS&EA and Baltic initiatives

In 2018, the RCG NA, NSEA and Baltic created a pan-regional intersessional sub-group on the development of Regional Work Plan (ISSG/RWP). The mandate given to the ISSG was as follows:

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:

¹ <https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/finished-projects/>

Discussions and clarifications on RWP can be found in subsequent RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic² (2019, 2020, 2021) and it is important to note that the ISSG/RWP developed the first RWP concept with the proposed non-binding RWP 2021 launched in 2020 by the RCG NANS&EA and RCG Baltic.

2.1.4. DG-MARE Call for proposals

In 2020, the EU Commission released a call for proposals (MARE/2020/08) on strengthening regional cooperation in the field of data collection. The ISSG/RWP took the lead in composing a large consortium to propose the Fishn'Co project, and the Mediterranean and Black Sea experts proposed the alter ego STREAMLINE project. The two projects encompassed the full range of activities in the RCGs, with the exception of RCG Long Distance Fisheries which declined participation since they felt there was not enough collaborative initiatives to be part of an RWP at that time.

2.2. Fishn'Co initial work

The project Fishn'Co initiated a second RWP test run (RWP NANSEA and RWP Baltic test run 2022, Decision #05 in RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic 2021) as soon as the first months of the project (January to June 2021). This was intended to take care of the STECF recommendations on the first RWP test run proposed by RCG in 2020 and seek feedback from National Correspondents for the preparation of the further project proposals. This second test run RWP, based on the exact NWP format which was just approved for the period 2022-2027, received a better appreciation than the first one, especially the table 1.2 on regional coordination developed by the ISSG on National Correspondents and the table 2.1 on the list of species/stocks which was used immediately by a majority of MS in their NWP 2022-2024 with 'RCG agreed statistics' mentioned under the columns 'Data sources used'.

2.3. STECF feedbacks

STECF point of view and evaluation of RWP was along since 2018 with the first references to RWP being made in STECF-18-18 (2018) and preparing the ground for further evaluation of RWP (STECF-19-18, 2019). Then in their 2020 session, STECF anticipated the links to RWP in the NWP/AR template for the period starting in 2022 (STECF-20-18, 2020). The main feedback came in 2021 and 2022 when STECF evaluated the two consecutive non-binding RWP for 2021 and 2022 proposed by RCG NANS&EA and Baltic (STECF-20-18, 2020 and STECF_21-17, 2021). In its last RWP evaluation (STECF_21-17, 2021), **STECF suggested that it was time for the RCGs, Fishn'Co and Streamline to focus on official RWPs 2025-2027 which would need to be approved by 31st December 2023.** The objective of such an anticipation of deadline was to have RWP ready when MS will take care of their NWP for the period 2025-2027, that is during spring and summer 2024.

² <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/docs/rcg>

3. Preparing the ground for an official RWP 2025-2027

3.1. Consultation to National Correspondents

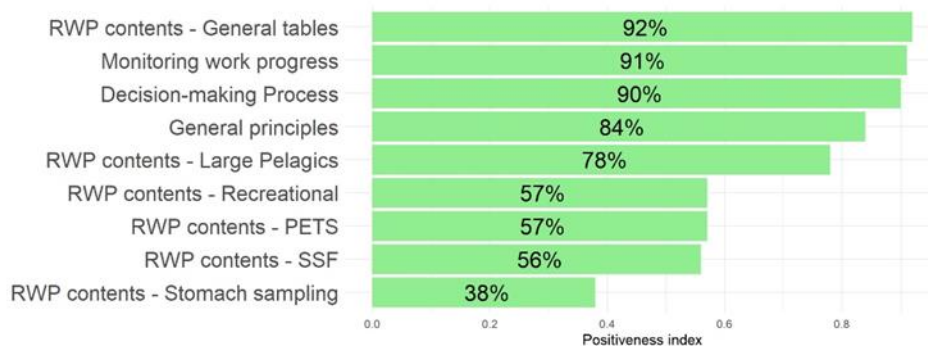
The consultation to all EU National correspondents (EU/NC) was intended to prepare the discussions during the RCG 2022 technical meetings regarding the development of Regional Work Plans (RWP), based on RCG/ISSGs regular work and Fishn’Co contribution to adapt all coordination initiatives in a RWP format. The aim of the consultation was also to inform EU/NCs on the work progress of the project as well as asking for feedback on the overall setup of RWP and the suggested decision-making process for future RWP.

The consultation was successful with 24 MS out of 26, responding with comments and feedback on 30 questions on the following topics:

1. General principles
2. Decision making process
3. RWP contents with specific focus on PETS, recreational and small-scale fisheries, on stomach sampling and large pelagics and on some generic tables
4. Monitoring the work progress

The main outputs of the consultation have been presented to the RCG NANS&EA, Baltic and Large Pelagics 2022 Technical Meetings and the report³ is available on the RCG website. Responses for the Mediterranean & Black Sea countries have not been displayed during these presentations but forwarded to Streamline⁴ project for a dedicated consideration and presentation to RCG Med&BS Technical Meeting.

Here below (Figure 1) is a synthesis of the positiveness indexes from the consultation showing the differences in readiness to go further in early 2022. A first set of elements capturing more than 90% approval are (i) the general tables of the Work Plans templates (i.e. Table 1.2 on International coordination, Table 1.3 on Bi and multilateral agreements, Table 2.1 on Stocks and Table 2.6 on Surveys at sea), (ii) the monitoring of work progress with the infographics developed by the Fishn’Co project (which is not part of a RWP content) and (iii) the decision-making process for developing a RWP Rules of Procedures. Some refinements on the RWP proposals were taken into consideration by Fishn’Co, but the elements presented in these sections were given to be solid bases for the future.



³ https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Report-on-the-NCs-consultation_final.pdf

⁴ <https://www.streamlineproject.eu/>

Figure 1: Positiveness index per section of the report. Sections are reordered by decreasing order of their index.

The second set of questions receiving between 70 and 90% approval included the general principles for developing a RWP and elements for the Large Pelagics RWP. A third set was composed of the PETS, recreational and small-scale fisheries issues, which, moreover, included the greatest number of specific questions. Lastly, there is the stomach sampling with the lowest approval rate, but this low rating may also be explained by the fact that only one coordinated action is ongoing in the North-Sea and a few scattered initiatives elsewhere and some questions never meant to gather 100% of positive answers (e.g. are you willing to analyse stomach sampling from other countries, ...). All these feedbacks and suggestions were thoroughly evaluated by the relevant RCG/ISSG and Fishn’Co in view of the RWPs 2025-2027 proposals.

4. Strategy for implementation of the RWP 2025-2027

4.1. Timeline

During the March 2022 NC meeting, DG-MARE proposed three timeline options for the adoption of the first formal RWP which would cover the period 2025-2027. All options consider the proposal of the RWP 2025-2027 in the second quarter of 2023 and differ on the further adoption or not by the Commission services. Two options are proposed in case of formal adoption, one which would require evaluation by STECF in June 2023 for an adoption in January 2024, the other would pass through STECF evaluation in November 2023 for an adoption in May 2024. This was then discussed in RCG 2022 and the timeline without formal adoption (Fig. 2) by COM was adopted (RCG NANSEA and Baltic 2022, Decision #4). More details from Fishn’Co WP2 are given in the project deliverable describing the agreed decision-making structure⁵.

Regional Work Plans no adoption timeline (3)

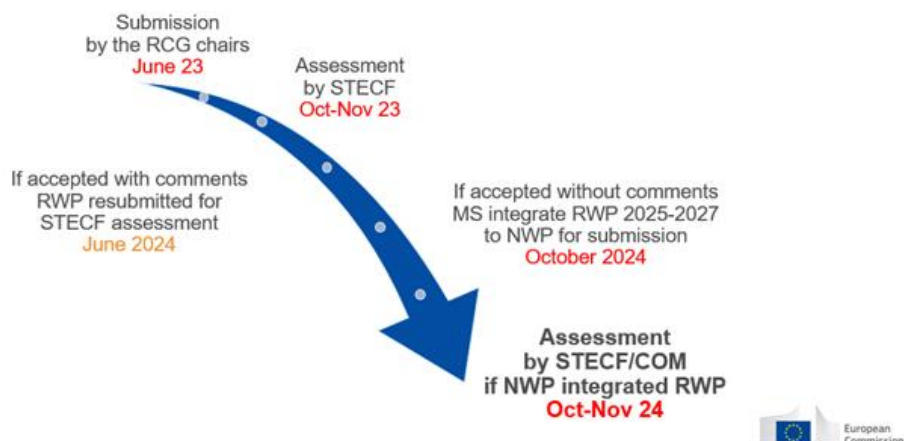


Figure 2: Timeline for RWP 2025-2027 without adoption by COM (slide from DG-MARE presentation to NC meeting)

⁵ https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/D3-Description-Decision-making-Structure_FISHN%C2%B4CO_final.pdf

4.2.Format

The format of the first non-binding RWPs developed in 2020 for the year 2021 was a specific format meant to accommodate a multi-countries structure of tables, with for example, a column for each country in all tables. Comments by STECF (STECF-18-16) were that some of those tables were overly complex and that they were based on the 2014-2021 template so not suitable for the future. In October 2021, the Fishn'Co proposal for non-binding RWP NANSEA and Baltic 2022 was based on the exact NWP template for the period 2022-2027 which was adopted that same year. STECF (STECF-21-17) thoroughly commented the proposal but not the format, implicitly indicating they had no issues with it.

The final proposal for RWP format is the exact same template as the NWP for the period 2022-2027 with some adaptations, mainly in the front page where the reference to Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/39 of 12 January 2022 linked to NWP was removed and references to national activities replaced with regional activities in the textbox headers and general comments. Textbox 1B had its scope modified, replacing other data collection activities by other data collection related activities, to accommodate the need to describe agreed and coordinated tools and means such as RCG secretariat, RDBES, ISSG activities and any other specific regional developments.

4.3.Linkage between NWP and RWP

From the early discussions in RCGs and STECF to Fishn'Co, the RWP contents and mechanics of linkage to NWP lead to numerous expressions and literature. The last attempt to simplify these into principles by Fishn'Co was proposed in the consultation, which also led to feedbacks and comments, essentially pointing out ambiguities and unnecessary. The very basic principles which remain and was used for the proposed RWP 2025-2027 is as follows:

Principle 1: RWP should only contain elements agreed at RCGs and conversely any type of agreement reached in a RCG should find a place in a RWP.

In Fishn'Co it was commonly agreed that a RWP could be considered as a 'book of agreements' at a Regional level. This means that anyone searching agreements reached in a region would simply have to refer to a RWP.

Principle 2: RWP will contain information on a more general level so that there will not be a need to update it every year when some numbers in one MS NWP table will change. RWP may be amended during interim years, only if the amendments do not lead to modification and resubmission of all MS NWP in the region.

The question on the invariability of the RWP over a three-year period did not reach consensus. The utility of being able to modify the RWP on a yearly basis (addition/termination/modification of agreements) was understood but the need to resubmit NWPs to mirror the modifications was deemed a step too far.

Principle 3: MS full program is reflected in their NWP tables and textboxes.

Each MS is required to hold one set of tables and one text document for the NWP which contains information on both national and regional aspects (Fig. 3). The regional aspects should match those of each RWP relevant to the MS. MS should copy all relevant information from RWP tables directly into the corresponding table in the NWP to ensure consistency between NWPs and RWPs, and when reporting in the AR. It is possible that NWP text may summarise RWP text and provide a link to the

RWP for more details. When the evaluation of a MS NWP takes place, only the national parts need to be evaluated as the RWP part will have already been evaluated and accepted.

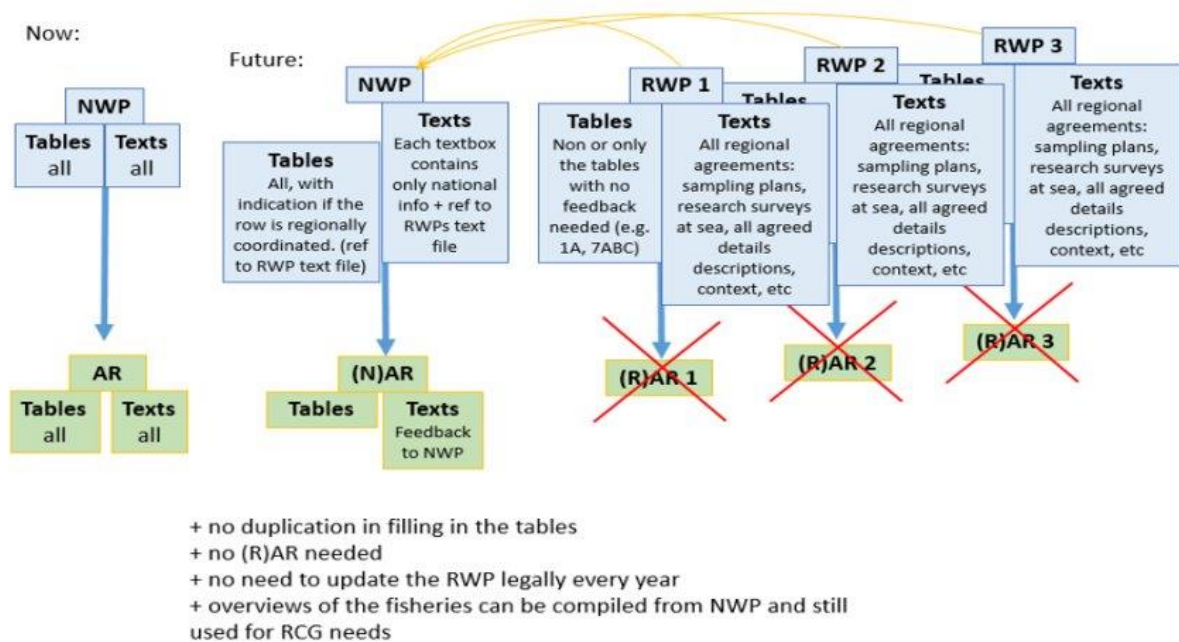


Figure 3: Schematic view of linkages between NWP and RWP.

4.4.Content

The prime concept and content of a RWP are the agreements that cover a large range of issues such as survey coordination and execution, but also regional sampling plans including data sharing mechanisms, data quality checks, sampling protocols, optimization of sampling designs, field work on data sampling, etc. A RWP should consist of a number of different building blocks and a number of (bi or multi-lateral) common approaches proposed by RCG and agreed at NC Decision Meeting.

The proposal by Fishn’Co was that a RWP should only contain elements agreed at RCG, with two specific text boxes giving insights on elements of coordination almost ready to be part of a future RWP (Textbox 1A on case studies, Figure 4) and insights of tools and services of relevance for all MS to the region (Textbox 1B, Figure 5).

It is to be noted that each ISSG is developing regional coordination, with agreed objectives and roadmaps described in the infographics (see Fishn’Co WP4 for details). In the 2nd test run RWP for NANSEA and Baltic, all this information was also reported in relevant textboxes of the RWPs, which led to confusion and complexity. The feedbacks from the test runs were that only agreed coordination should be reported in a RWP (Principle #1). Fishn’Co proposed an exception to this rule, using Textbox 1A (case studies, Figure 4) in order to inform on elements which are planned to be ready in the coming years. In Fishn’Co it was named ‘the RWP kitchen’ and it was thought informative for all MS to be aware of the outstanding work.

TEXTBOX IA – TEST STUDIES DESCRIPTION (THE RWP KITCHEN !)

NANSEA	BALTIC	LARGE PELAGICS	ECON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trawl Fishery in Iberian Waters Case Study Freezer Trawler Case Study Bay of Biscay (BoB) common dolphin (<i>Delphinus delphis</i>) case study North Sea bass (<i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>) stock marine recreational fisheries sampling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PETS, Harbour porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>) bycatch case study Baltic cod (<i>Gadus morhua</i>) marine recreational fisheries sampling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No test study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No test study

Figure 4: Content of Textbox IA for all RWPs proposed by the Fishn’Co project

TEXTBOX IB – OTHER DATA COLLECTION RELATED ACTIVITIES

NANSEA	BALTIC	LARGE PELAGICS	ECON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCG’s secretariat & website Regional data base and estimation System (RDBES) Regional Coordination taking place in ISSGs and pan regional cooperation between RCGs Marine Recreational Fisheries Surveys Quality Assurance Toolkit (QAT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCG’s secretariat & website Regional data base and estimation System (RDBES) Regional Coordination taking place in ISSGs and pan regional cooperation between RCGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCG’s secretariat & website Regional data base and estimation System (RDBES) Regional Coordination taking place in ISSGs and pan regional cooperation between RCGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCG’s secretariat & website Regional Coordination taking place in ISSGs and pan regional cooperation between RCGs

Figure 5: Content of Textbox IB for all RWPs proposed by the Fishn’Co project

Figures 6 to 11 provide insights of the elements included in the different sections of the proposed RWPs textboxes and figure 12 for the set of RWP tables. The details of all these elements form the entire RWPs proposed to RCGs as part of the hand-over to the ISSG on the Development of Regional Work Plan (RCG NANSEA and Baltic, 2022, Resolution #09) and to RCG ECON for the economic focus areas (RCG ECON, 2022, Recommendations #12, 13 and 14).

TEXTBOX SECTION 2 – BIOLOGICAL DATA

NANSEA	BALTIC	LARGE PELAGICS	ECON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Box 2.3: Diadromous species data collection in freshwater <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating coordination on eel, trout and salmon Text Box 2.4: Recreational Fisheries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection of species for the different regions in addition to the mandatory species RDBES incorporation of recreational fisheries data Text Box 2.5: Sampling plan description for biological data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> list of PET Species agreed RDBES incorporation of bycatch data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Box 2.3: Diadromous species data collection in freshwater <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating coordination on eel, trout and salmon Text Box 2.4: Recreational Fisheries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection of species for the different regions in addition to the mandatory species RDBES incorporation of recreational fisheries data Text Box 2.5: Sampling plan description for biological data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional coordination for sampling Small Pelagic in the Baltic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Box 2.4: Recreational Fisheries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion ongoing Text Box 2.5: Sampling plan description for biological data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuna Sampling On Shore scheme (no associated Table 2.5) Observe scheme (no associated Table 2.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not relevant

Figure 6: Content of Textboxes of Section 2 – Biological data for all RWPs proposed by the Fishn’Co project

TEXTBOX SECTION 2 – BIOLOGICAL DATA – SURVEY AT SEA

NANSEA	BALTIC	LARGE PELAGICS	ECON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Sea and Eastern Arctic (ICES areas 1, 2, 3a, 4, 7d) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 surveys: IESNS, BTS, CODS_Q4, DYFS, IBTS_Q1, IBTS_Q3, IHLS, NHAS, NSMEGS, NSSS, SNS_NLD, Nephrops_UWTV (3-4) North Atlantic (ICES areas 5-14 and NAFO areas) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19 surveys: IBWSS, BIOMAN, CSHAS, ECOCADIZ, GGS, IAMS, IBTS_Q4, JUVENA, MEGS, NEPS (28), ORHAGO_Q4, PALPRO, REDTAS, SAHMAS, DEPM, Nephrops_UWTV (16-17, 19, 20-22, 30) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BITS_Q1, BITS_Q4, BIAS, SPRAS, RHLS, FEJUCS, GRAHS <p>In blue, surveys including a cost sharing agreement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not relevant

Figure 7: Content of Textboxes of Section 2 – Survey at sea for all RWPs proposed by the Fishn’Co project

TEXTBOX SECTION 3 – FISHING ACTIVITY DATA

NANSEA	BALTIC	LARGE PELAGICS	ECON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small Scale Fisheries (SSF) data models for RDBES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small Scale Fisheries (SSF) data models for RDBES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFMOs informal coordination on <u>fishing activity variables</u> and "<u>data indicators</u>" Coordinated of PS data collection of <u>vessel fleet information</u> (no <u>signed agreement</u>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

Figure 8: Content of Textboxes of Section 3 – fishing Activity data for all RWP's proposed by the Fishn'Co project

TEXTBOX SECTION 4 – IMPACT OF FISHERIES ON MARINE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

NANSEA	BALTIC	LARGE PELAGICS	ECON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Box 4.2: Incidental catches of sensitive species <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of the relative risk of bycatch for the different gear types and/or metiers Text Box 4.3: Fisheries impact on marine habitats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NS case study (plan + first attempt to initiate regional coordination of samples analysis) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Box 4.2: Incidental catches of sensitive species <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of the relative risk of bycatch for the different gear types and/or metiers Text Box 4.3: Fisheries impact on marine habitats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Box 4.2: Incidental catches of sensitive species <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current measures implemented within each RFMO Text Box 4.3: Fisheries impact on marine habitats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No real coordination but national initiatives (future coordination in progress) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not relevant

Figure 9: Content of Textboxes of Section 4 – Impact of fisheries on marine biological resources for all RWP's proposed by the Fishn'Co project

TEXTBOX SECTION 5,6 & 7 – ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT IN FISHERIES, AQUACULTURE & FISH PROCESSING

NANSEA	BALTIC	LARGE PELAGICS	ECON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taken care by RWP ECON 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taken care by RWP ECON 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taken care by RWP ECON, <u>although specificities in terms of fish farming to be considered.</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Text Box 5.2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Definitions for the economic and social variables to be collected under Table 7 and 9 of the EU MAP Delegated Decision annex . ▪ Text Box 6.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Definitions for the economic and social variables to be collected under Table 10 and 9 of the EU MAP Delegated Decision annex . ▪ Text Box 7.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Definitions for the economic variables are available in Table 7.1 of the Annex Guidelines tables.

Figure 10: Content of Textboxes of Section 5, 6 & 7 – Economic and social impact in fisheries, aquaculture and fish processing for all RWPs proposed by the Fishn’Co project

ANNEXES

NANSEA	BALTIC	LARGE PELAGICS	ECON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annex 1.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional stomach content sampling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annex 1.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Baltic Small Pelagic Fisheries Regional</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annex 1.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Tuna Sampling On Shore</u> ▪ Observe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annex 1.2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ List of <u>statistical methods.</u>

Figure 11: Content of Textboxes annexes for all RWPs proposed by the Fishn’Co project

TABLES

NANSEA	BALTIC	LARGE PELAGICS	ECON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Table 1.2: Regional and International coordination ▪ Table 1.3: Bi and multilateral agreements ▪ Table 2.1: List of required species/stocks ▪ Table 2.6: Surveys-at-sea ▪ Table 4.1. Stomach sampling and analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Table 1.2: Regional and International coordination ▪ Table 1.3: Bi and multilateral agreements ▪ Table 2.1: List of required species/stocks ▪ Table 2.6: Surveys-at-sea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Table 1.2: Regional and International coordination ▪ Table 2.1: List of required species/stocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No set of tables.

Figure 12: Content of Tables for all RWPs proposed by the Fishn’Co project

4.4.1. Table 1.3 specifics

WP Table 1.3 lists bi and multilateral agreements. These agreements are signed arrangements between countries in a region to carry out sampling activities for one another (e.g. sampling foreign landings, otolith reading, maturity or stomach sampling analysis, ...). In previous NWPs, the signed agreements were attached as an annex of each involved MS NWP text document and listed with brief information in each of NWP table (ex Table 7C in NWP 2014 to 2021 templates). Fishn'Co, in coordination with SECWEB, proposed to develop an agreement repository⁶ in the RCG website, where the signed arrangement would be hosted.

In the RWP it comes in Table 1.3 a line per involved country detailing briefly the arrangement (with the same wording) and a link to the RCG repository to get access to the signed document. The MS corresponding line in the RWP is to be copied into each of the NWP Table 1.3.

4.4.2. Table 2.1 specifics

WP Table 2.1 relates to listing the landings and quota shares of all species/stocks of the EU Delegated Decision (EU 2021/1167) Table 1. As soon as the test run RWP NANSEA and Baltic 2021, it was thought that a collaborative approach to fill in this table was far more relevant than letting each MS evaluate the percentage of their European catches and quota shares for a given reference period. An R script has been under development for years, with main involvement of the experts in ISSG on Catch and sampling overviews and help from DG MARE for providing key reference documents on quotas regulations. Fishn'Co WP3 contributed to improve the R script used, moved it to a collaborative development platform created specifically by ICES ([rwp_tools](https://github.com/ices-tools-dev/eu_rwp_tool)) and coded it as a R library with the objectives of easing the maintenance and use of the script in the future years. The work done in Fishn'Co could not be finished in time for the proposed RWP 2025-2027, but all efforts will be made in both ISSG/RWP and ISSG on Catches and Sampling Overviews to update the Table 2.1 for the RCG Technical Meetings 2023. The main principles guiding the filling of Table 2.1 is as follows:

- The priority source for National landings is the data uploaded in the RDB as a result of the RCG data calls, then EUROSTAT for completing the species/stocks not covered by the RCG database. MS are free to modify any values by National Statistics and justify in the comment section on the rationale for doing so
- The information in support of the European quota share is the table provided by DG MARE mirroring the annual EU quota regulation figures.

4.4.3. Annex 1.1 specifics

In a RWP, Annex 1.1s are meant to inform on an agreed regional sampling design, thus meaning there needs to be a related regional sampling plan included in the RWP. In the Fishn'Co RWP 2025-2027 proposals, there is an Annex 1.1 for

- RWP NANSEA: A regional sampling plan for stomach sampling in the North Sea (Textbox 4.3 and table 4.1);
- RWP Baltic: A regional sampling plan on the Baltic small pelagics fisheries (Textbox and Table 2.5);

⁶ <https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/repository/>

⁷ https://github.com/ices-tools-dev/eu_rwp_tool

- RWP Large Pelagics: A regional sampling plan for tuna sampling inshore for commercial fishing trips (Textbox 2.5) and for tuna sampling at sea for commercial fishing trips (programme Observe, Textbox 2.5).

Note that there is no Annex 1.1 for any of the surveys at sea because, in the ICES areas, all coordinated survey designs are described in a survey manual⁸ and each MS may complement these with Annexes 1.1 in their NWP.

4.4.4. Data quality specifics

Within WP1, the Biological Data Quality Thematic Focus Area aimed to develop common templates and tools that MS can use to complete Annex 1.1 in a regional context to improve inter comparability of quality information. Objectives and tasks were defined to produce guidance for sampling design, sampling implementation, data checks, data storage, evaluating data accuracy and documenting methods of editing and imputing.

Regarding the precision analysis, an R implementation of an appropriate statistical algorithm for calculating the variance of point estimates from a multi-country, multi-stage, hierarchical commercial fisheries sampling program was developed. This work, done in collaboration with the ICES Group on Estimation with the RDBES data model (WGRDBES-EST) accepts input data in the ICES Regional Database & Estimation System (RDBES⁹) data format. In the near future, the data will be in the ICES Regional Database & Estimation System (RDBES) data format.

WGRDBES-EST are also developing a package ('RDBEScore'¹⁰) to support design-based estimation using the RDBES – as part of this work functions to estimate totals/means using a generalised Horvitz-Thompson estimator and estimate variance using the Sen-Yates-Grundy formulation have been written. For the Fishn'Co project an R-Markdown script has been written to display the estimates and variance values in an interactive way and another for identifying the most important bias topic is to compare the sampling programme data to the commercial fishing effort and landings data to illustrate its coverage. The latest version of the scripts can be found on the ICES github¹¹.

More details on all the Fishn'Co project developments related to Thematic Focus Areas are given in the project deliverable on the overview of the state of play, data gaps and needs¹².

⁸ https://ices-library.figshare.com/collections/ICES_Survey_Protocols/6315609

⁹ <https://github.com/ices-tools-dev/RDBES>

¹⁰ <https://github.com/ices-tools-dev/RDBEScore>

¹¹ <https://github.com/ices-tools-dev/RDBEScore/tree/main/FishNCo>

¹² https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/D1-Overview-of-the-state-of-play_data-gaps-and-needs_final.pdf

5. Organisational aspects

5.1. Timeline and procedure for adoption of a RWP

One of the primary purposes of the RCGs is to prepare Regional Work Plans, which should include sampling designs/plans, procedures, methods, quality assurance and quality control for collecting and processing data, and conditions for the delivery of data.

In order to cover the objectives of:

- a. developing and describing processes needed in discussions among MS and in the RCGs about sharing responsibilities, expected contributions, decision making and adoption processes, and how to implement and manage RWP in a harmonized, cooperative and transparent way;
- b. consulting with the RCGs and National Correspondents on the processes needed for the implementation of the RWPs including processes for discussions and decision making.

The following steps were proposed by Fishn'Co (see details in the project deliverable describing the agreed decision-making structure):

1. Mandate for drafting the RWPs – RCG chairs to send to all NCs an invitation for assigning experts to take part in the drafting of RWP;
2. Assigning experts to ISSG/RWP - NCs are assigning experts with a strong commitment from the countries, for drafting the relevant parts of the RWP in the ISSG/RWP;
3. Drafting of the RWP – ISSG/RWP is mandated to develop RWPs (first one in 2023 based on Fishn'Co outputs);
4. Consulting with NCs and presenting to RCG – Once the RWPs have been finalised by ISSG/RWP, they are sent to MS/NCs for feedback and comments in order to present the most updated version of RWPs to RCG Technical Meetings with deadline within one month after sending;
5. Final draft of RWP – The ISSG/RWP takes care of RCG Technical Meeting comments to finalise the RWP in preparation of the NC Decision Meeting;
6. Decision Making Meeting – Formal agreement on the draft RWPs for sending to the EU Commission;
7. Follow-up on RWPs – During the STECF evaluation meeting, ISSG/RWP experts and NCs should be available to participate to the real-time exchange (a.k.a. ping pong) to answer any pending question or issues. If more serious considerations (not able to be resolved during the STECF meeting session) are to be taken into consideration, the ISSG/RWP is given the task to prepare a new version to be approved by all NCs for evaluation by STECF in its next spring session;
8. Agreement of the RWP – The RWP is agreed by the EU Commission after the positive evaluation by STECF.

5.2. Revised RoP that accommodates for development and adoption of RWP

One of the objectives of Fishn'Co was to have a proposal for one version of the Rules of Procedure (RoP) for all RCGs with the focus on the decision-making process being similar for all regions and supra regions. Once the processes of discussions and decision making for adoption of a RWP were defined and described, the RoP of the RCGs were further discussed and analysed in order to be revised and adapted according to the decision-making structure for the adoption of RWPs. Within Fishn'Co, a comparison of the RoPs of all RCGs was carried out. In addition, an exercise, compiling Baltic and NANSEA RoP to check what is aligned and what is not was conducted.

To reach the Fishn'Co objectives, a proposal for revision of the present RoPs, by identifying possible burdens for the decision-making processes and by proposing solutions was provided as a combined RoP for RCGs for Baltic and NANSEA. The combined version was agreed upon during the RCG Baltic and NANSEA decision meeting - Decision 9 of the decision meeting 2021 Report.

The final version of RoP for RCGs for Baltic and NANSEA are available online¹³ and all other RCGs should be recommended to compare their RoPs with this final version and if discrepancies are observed in the section "Decision-making on a draft regional work plan", amendments should be made in order for the goal to have one version of RoP for all RCGs with the focus on the decision process to be reached.

6. Communication and dissemination

6.1. Detailed dissemination and communication plan (DCP) for the RCGs

The Dissemination and Communication Plan (DCP) first draft was presented during Fishn'Co's kick off meeting for discussion. The DCP (see D.4.1 in Annex II) includes i) the identification and classification of the relevant stakeholders' groups for receiving Fishn'Co outcomes; ii) a preliminary selection of communication contents and materials, and suitable channels to convey the project messages; and iii) a preliminary plan of dissemination and communication actions within the project timeline. The DCP was consolidated into a living document which has been updated periodically accordingly with the emerging needs. The DCP identifies the communication channels as well as target audiences, communication products, including the communication action planner.

6.2. Permanent update of the Stakeholders database for the RWP

Several meetings at different scale were held to disseminate Fishn'Co purpose and structure among the RCG participants, and to engage them in project activities, confirming specific interest to contribute by a total of 95 experts from partner and non-partner organisations. The identification of stakeholders and the setup of the database has been done in synergy with the Secweb¹⁴ project. Additional stakeholders have been identified in cooperation with RCGs and ISSGs chairs. During the second half of 2022 Secweb developed the database structure. The profile, role, and interest of different stakeholders were key information for the design of the stakeholders' database. Fishn'Co contributed with profiles to test run and populate the database.

The stakeholder database was released in Feb 2023, before the end of the project and now it is work in progress for the coming months to feed it with data and to keep it regularly updated and running. The database is now operational and integrated into the RCG's website¹⁵.

¹³ https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/RoPs_210903_RCG-NANSEA_RCG-Baltic_210920.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/secweb/>

¹⁵ <https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/database/>

6.3. Specific communication and dissemination contents and materials

Several dissemination and communication contents and materials have been developed during project implementation (all links to the documents are given in Annex II):

- Project leaflet;
- Fishn'Co microsite at the RCG's website where most dissemination contents and materials are available to download: logo, leaflet, templates, public results and video.
- An interactive infographic of Levels of Ambition has been developed and integrated into the RCG's website to give visibility mainly to the work carried out within WP1;
- Fishn'Co related six news items to feed into RCGs' newsletter. In addition, the RCGs' twitter account (@fisheriesRCG) has been used to promote the website and newsletter contents about Fishn'Co.
- Fishn'Co promotional video was released on the 9th February 2023 and is available on the RCGs YouTube channel.

6.4. Stakeholder events and networking

Fishn'Co partners participated widely in RCGs Technical Meetings in 2021 and 2022, from early June with RCG NANSEA and Baltic, through RCG Large Pelagics at the end of June, RCG LDF in July and RCG ECON in September.

Fishn'Co project held seven assembly meetings during the project execution. These meetings were attended by a wide range of experts from Fishn'Co network, partners, and non-partner organizations, as well DG-MARE project officers. These meetings promoted the transparency and validation of the progress done by Fishn'Co in drafting the Regional Work Plans. Minutes from all meetings and workshops are available in Deliverable 2 (*in Annex II*).

WP4 team took an active part in the consultation process, *FISHN'CO Consultation 2022 – Preparing for RWP*, generating the questionnaire on EU survey platform, and as the communication channel between Fishn'Co and the Member States. Periodical progress reports on the consultation were delivered to WP3 leader, and reminders were sent to successfully accomplish the consultation.

7. Lessons learned and ways forward

7.1. Fishn'Co experience

If anything is to be learned from Fishn'Co, it is that **there is a huge gap between ISSG activities and their transcription into formal agreements**. This can be explained by the variety of coordination types which are all specific to each ISSG and which rendered difficult the comparison between them or the search of similarities and dissimilarities of approaches. In its first year of activity, Fishn'Co initiated the harmonisation of ISSG description of activities, ambitions and roadmaps and gave life to the infographics, now visible on the RCG website. This harmonisation and inter-comparability of ISSG activities needs to continue and develop further. It allows for each ISSG to better understand the work of other ISSGs and learn from each other on the possibilities and good practices. It is also highly valuable for RCG Technical meetings and NCs to monitor the ISSG activities and measure the progress made every year.

During the project, the **demonstration was made that the RWP is the appropriate vector of communication and presentation of all types of agreements** reached in a region. Fishn'Co often referred to RWP as a "book of agreements". Almost every RCG/ISSG could present some form of

agreements in RWP textboxes and/or tables, which makes the RWP the reference document to consult all regional agreements for a given period.

The format of the RWPs were subject of lengthy discussions for years, until Fishn'Co proposed the **same format as the NWPs** with some adaptations. Having the same format for NWP and RWP has a lot of benefits, from their appropriation by all MSs to communicating with STECF and all stakeholders.

Every expert/team collecting data on the field is in expectation of guidelines, good practices, recommendations and other reference documents helping to understand that the work is carried out correctly and in accordance with end-users' needs. The contents of RWP sections proposed by Fishn'Co followed this idea that **something was to be proposed in each section of the RWP**, even if the content was on basic agreements or even no agreement so far. The rationale was to demonstrate where the coordinated activities were standing at the time of an RCG Technical Meetings 2023 and pave the way for future incremental progress. In other words, any information summarising the status of the coordination of activities was better than leaving the section blank. **It becomes the responsibility of the RCG Technical Meeting to follow suit or not in each of the sections** on what will ultimately appear in the formal RWP 2025-2027, with the idea that it would be easier to remove or amend some text and/or table than to add a missing section.

The Rule of Procedures (RoP) for RCG NANSEA and Baltic were modified to accommodate for the inclusion of RWPs. One of the objectives of Fishn'Co was to have a proposal for one version of the RoP for all RCGs with the focus on the decision process being similar for all regions and supra regions. This was not possible during the project, but it is thought that the harmonisation of RCG NANSEA and Baltic RoP can serve as an example to follow by the other RCGs.

7.2. Ways forward

RWPs development is a stepwise approach and the proposed RWPs 2025-2027 are the first of their kind. This means that, whatever is eventually accepted as part of these RWP 2025-2027, the RWPs will be set up as a central element in the RCG activities for the years to come. In Fishn'Co this was called the "snowball effect". The RWP 2025-2027 will structure the related NWPs 2025-2027 and all NCS and RCG participants will be able to learn from this implementation to define how the RWPs may evolve in the future.

The ISSG-RWP will take over Fishn'Co to finalise the proposed RWPs during the RCG 2023 sessions. The high energy and manpower available in Fishn'Co that could spark the development of the proposed RWPs is telling on the difficulty of the exercise. The ISSG/RWP will not have the same capacity as in Fishn'Co to steer all elements in every section of the RWPs. **Some mechanism should be discussed during the RCG TM 2023 on how to ensure a structured flow from ISSG activities to RWP elements.** It starts with the need to coordinate and harmonise the activities spanning all ISSGs in a region so that the same language is used for the same type of coordination.

Learning through implementation is the best way forward for a new initiative such RWP. **Every effort should be made in 2023 to finalise the first set of official RWPs** in advance of MS preparing for their NWP 2025-2027. By doing so and adopting a flexible attitude towards any issue or question emanating from MS in the following years will be key to preparing the future of regional coordination of activities in every section or module of the EU-MAP.

8. Acknowledgements

This project has been financed through an EU Commission call for proposal (Grant Agreement No MARE/2020/08 – SI2.839816 – FISHNCO). The leaders of the project wish to thank all participants and contributors, especially the RCG chairs, National Correspondents and EU DG MARE for their unconditional support and willingness to help resolving all issues during the time of the project.

9. References

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Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1168 of 27 April 2021 establishing the list of mandatory research surveys at sea and thresholds as part of the multiannual Union programme for the collection and management of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors from 2022, OJ L 253, 16.7.2021, p. 92–99.

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ANNEX I – Project Objectives

Strategic Objectives

- Providing added value to the RCGs and ISSGs, and complement their work to propose a full structure, process and elements of Regional Work Plans (RWP) for each of their activities;
- Strengthen regional or EU-wide cooperation on data collection and enhance data quality, by developing the knowledge and support to accomplish further regional or EU-wide cooperation; in this regard, cooperation with Streamline project has also been fostered and as a result there has been a pan-regional approach towards developing RWPs;
- Align with the 2021 and 2022 RCG plenary sessions to fully embed the RWPs in the mechanism of proposing Work Plans within the framework of EU-MAP.

The participation of experts from four RCGs allowed the project to address the full scope of thematic focus areas in line with EU-MAP and RCG intersessional work programmes.

The project was structured around five Work Packages, their objectives are summarised as follows:

Work Package 1: Compiling, identifying and filling information gaps

- a) Assess the current stages of regional coordination and define the level of ambitions for the content of their work for the defined RWP focus areas.
- b) Identify the elements that will go towards the development of the RWP and analyse the information and knowledge gaps.
- c) Agree on the core ISSG tasks to be carried out as part of the intersessional RCG work and the supporting tasks to be carried out as part of the Fishn'Co.
- d) Address these support tasks as distinctive pieces of work to be financed and completed within the Fishn'Co project.
- e) Communicate WP1 outputs of RWP content to WP3 for the development of the RWP structures.

Work Package 2: Establishing decision-making structures/processes

- a) Develop a methodology for creating RWP and determine the decision-making process of the RWP implementation in accordance with the Rules of Procedures (RoP) for the relevant RCGs, and the Regulation 2017/1004 establishing Data Collection Framework (DCF). The RoP have been revised and adapted accordingly to allow for the decision-making process of implementing a RWP following the no adoption timeline (3) proposed by the COM.
- b) Develop and describe processes needed in discussions among MS and in the RCGs about sharing responsibilities, expected contributions, decision-making and adoption processes, and how to implement and manage an RWP in a harmonised, cooperative and transparent way. The final steps in the process, in particular the feedback loop, were adapted according to comments received from the COM, to make sure that everyone involved in the process could provide their feedback on time with the RCGs cycle and the STECF evaluation.
- c) Consult with the RCGs as well as national correspondents on the processes needed for the implementation of the RWPs, including the processes for discussions and decision making.

Work Package 3: Drafting the Work Plan

- a) Develop a structure for RWP in coordination with WP1 and WP2.
- b) Develop complements of RWP which are not planned in WP1.
- c) Integrate the outcomes of WP1 and WP2 in documents and presentations for RCG purposes.
- d) Ensure communication and consultation with stakeholders on the concepts and implementation of RWP.

Work Package 4: Communication and dissemination

- a) To integrate communication into the RCGs strategy and to elaborate and implement communication and dissemination actions around the RWP.
- b) To promote visibility and engagement towards the RWP stakeholders (EU, MS, RFMOs, ...).
- c) To set up a transparency system of communication through the development of collaborative tools.

Work Package 5: Project co-ordination and management

- a) To coordinate closely with project partners and non-partners to achieve project objectives and manage project activities to ensure that they are carried out effectively and successfully.
- b) To keep the project running smoothly.

ANNEX II – Project Deliverables

All annexes related here refer to the documents available in the EU repository website dedicated to regional grants and the Fishn'Co project. [www](#)

Deliverables required in the Call for Proposals

Deliverable 1. Overview of the state of play, data gaps and needs (Annex 1). [www](#)

Deliverable 2. Minutes or brief reports of any workshops, meetings or other (Annex 2). [www](#)

Deliverable 3. Short description of the agreed decision-making structure (Annex 3). [www](#)

Deliverable 4. Draft workplans (each RWP textboxes and Tables are accessible through internet links given in WP3 Deliverables)

Below, a summary of partial deliverables produced during the reporting period under different work packages. Partial deliverables have been grouped into main deliverables above to ease the reading and to avoid having numerous files with different versions. This approach has been previously discussed and agreed with project officers. This approach applies mainly to partial deliverables produced under WP1, WP2 and WP5 due to the nature of the outputs. The draft RWPs produced in WP3 are kept separately as they have their own entity. Similarly, WP4 deliverables are presented as partial deliverables, apart from D.4.4 that has been included in Deliverable 2 as part of the compilation.

WP1. Compiling, identifying, and filling information gaps

D.1.1. Gaps and needs to develop an RWP (*in* Deliverable 1).

D.1.2. Reports of workshops, meetings, or other creative tools, minutes from the different WP1 meetings and specific TFA meetings and reports from TFA – Biological Data Quality (*in* Deliverable 2).

WP2 - Establishing decision making structures/processes

D.2.1. A short description of the processes needed to develop an RWP.

D.2.2. Draft decision-making structures for developing the RWPs.

D.2.3. Draft timeline and procedure for adoption of an RWP.

D.2.4. Draft revised RoP that accommodate for development and adoption of RWP.

D.2.5. Slideshow on the summary of the draft decision-making process.

All deliverables above (D.2.1 – D.2.5) have been integrated in a stand-alone document, Deliverable 3. Deliverable 3 is a comprehensive document, where the process to establish the decision-making structures and processes can be followed through the evolution over time with different versions until reaching the final structure. The final version of RoP for RCGs Baltic and NANSEA are included as Annex 4 in the EU repository website. [www](#)

WP 3 – Drafting Regional Work Plans

The planned deliverables for 2022 were:

D.3.1. Draft elements of Regional Work Plan for RCG NANS&EA (textboxes and tables). RWP 2025-2027, January 2023 (Annex 5.a [www](#) and Annex 5.b [www](#) , respectively).

D.3.2. Draft elements of Regional Work Plan for RCG Baltic (textboxes and tables). RWP 2025-2027, January 2023 (Annex 6.a [www](#) and Annex 6.b [www](#) , respectively).

- D.3.3.** Draft elements of Regional Work Plan for RCG Large Pelagics (textboxes and tables). RWP 2025-2027, January 2023 (Annex 7.a [www](#) and Annex 7.b [www](#) , respectively).
- D.3.4.** Draft elements of Regional Work Plan related to economics and aquaculture for RCG ECON (textboxes only). RWP 2025-2027, January 2023 (Annex 8). [www](#)
- D.3.5.** Development of Regional Work Plans, main aspects and approach and strategy for their implementation. January 2023. (Annex 9 which was used as a basis for this final report) [www](#)
- D.3.6.** Slideshow on the summary of the draft regional work plan. (Annex 10). [www](#)

Fishn'Co launched an extensive consultation process in 2022 as an important step towards the drafting the RWPs. The Report on the outputs of NC Consultation 2022 on preparing for RWP 2025-2027 is presented in Annex 11. [www](#)

Furthermore, Fishn'Co developed the Dutch national profile as a first exercise to meet the demand for national profiles in the context of further social data collection of the EU. The National Profile of The Netherlands is presented in Annex 20. [www](#)

The RWP 2025-2027 proposals (principles, roadmap, contents, expectations for NC feedback) were presented to the EU Commission and all NCs on the 9th of March 2023 during the EU-NC meeting special session on the four EU grants (SECWEB, RDBFIS, STREAMLINE and FISHN'CO).

WP4: Communication and dissemination

- D.4.1.** Dissemination and Communication Plan (DCP) for Fishn'Co. Achieved. The DCP has last been updated in Feb 2023 (Annex 12). [www](#)
- D.4.2.** Dissemination and Communication Materials for Fishn'Co.
 - Project leaflet (Annex 13); [www](#)
 - narrative for RCGs webpage; [www](#)
 - interactive infographic gaps & ambition levels table; [www](#)

Fishn'Co related news on the RCG's website:

- FISHN'CO project successfully completes the development of Regional Work Plans for the RCGs NANSEA, Baltic, Large Pelagics and ECON; [www](#)
- FISHN'CO at a glance; [www](#)
- FISHN'CO partners and experts workshop at Vigo; [www](#)
- Interactive infographic of Level of Ambition available online; [www](#)
- Regional Work Plans for data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors launched for testing; [www](#)
- Interview with Joël Vigneau; [www](#)
- Fishn'Co promotional video. The video can be viewed on YouTube channel. [www](#) The video was released 9th Feb 2023. [www](#)
- D.4.3.** The large list of contacts managed in Fishn'Co helped the design and potential feeds into the RCGs' stakeholders database developed under SecWeb.
- D.4.4.** Compilation of reports from Stakeholders' events/meetings. Achieved. The project has a **dedicated repository** on Teams (FISHNCO_TECH) where minutes from different meetings, presentations and reports are available for partners and non-partners. A total of 108 people has access to the repository. Moreover, the compilation of minutes from plenary meetings, coordination meetings, WP meetings, etc as well as workshop and consultation process reports are presented in Deliverable 2.
Consultation process Questionnaire – FISHN'CO NC consultation 2022: Preparing for RWP, launched in April 2022.

WP5. Project coordination and management

- D.5.1.** Minutes from meetings. Minutes from various coordination meetings are available in Deliverable 2.
- D.5.2 a-c:** Reports to the EU Commission after the formal project meetings. No specific follow-up formal project meetings have been held as the project officer actively participated in different meetings and activities carried out within Fishn'Co project. Additionally, a specific repository has been created to grant the project officer access to partial deliverables.
- D.5.3 a-d:** Six-monthly detailed meeting plans. Fishn'Co Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings were held normally once a month, although there was no detailed calendar. PSC meetings were scheduled according to the project coordination needs.
- D.5.4:** Six-monthly progress reports. First progress report was submitted in July 2021 according to the specifications. Interim report, submission deadline extension for one month, the interim report was submitted on 30 March 2022. Interim report revision requested; interim report revised version was submitted on 25 May 2022. The second progress report was submitted on 29 July 2022. A revised version of the progress report was submitted on 24 Nov 2022.
- D.5.4 a** First progress report. July 2021 (Annex 14). [www](#)
- D.5.4 b** Interim report. December 2021 (Annex 15). [www](#)
- D.5.4 c** Second progress report. June 2022 (Annex 16). [www](#)
- D.5.4 d** Final report. February 2023

Additionally, as a supplementary information to the first progress report, there is the “Delivery and reporting obligations follow up” (Annex 17) [www](#) . This document was kept as a live document and used to facilitate further evidence of the achievements reported on a six-monthly basis. It was last updated in March 2023.

ANNEX III - Budget

Below the overview of the total cost incurred during the execution period, from 1st Jan 2021 to 28th Feb 2023:

1st January 2021		TO		28th February 2023					
	Direct eligible cost					Subtotal of direct eligible costs	Indirect eligible costs (7%)	Total eligible costs	Requested Funding from the EU
	Staff Costs	Sub-contracting	Travel costs and Subsistence	Equipment	Other Specific Costs				
TOTAL	579.551,89 €	26.455,00 €	11.165,00 €	2.452,22 €	2.847,47 €	622.471,59 €	43.573,01 €	666.044,59 €	566.137,90 €

The main deviations are:

- In general, staff costs were higher than originally planned. The impossibility of having physical meetings hampered some of the discussions and more time was needed to disentangle issues. Additionally, extra time was needed to incorporate the feedback from MS into the draft RWPs, validate the drafts with the relevant stakeholders and organize the hand-over of the outputs from Fishn'Co to the ISSG Regional Work Plans.
- Travel costs were less than originally planned due to COVID restrictions and the difficulties to travel, and therefore not being able to organize physical meetings.

In general terms, the deviation from the original budget is not significant given that it is less than 5% of the total budget, especially considering that all tasks have been accomplished and all deliverables have been completed successfully.

The total eligible costs are shown in a summary table below, together with the percentage of funding requested from the EU.

	Total eligible costs	Requested Funding from the EU
TOTAL	666.044,59 €	566.137,90 €
BUDGET	700.263,64 €	

There are no relevant problems concerning eligible costs, distribution of budget, financial constraints to highlight.

