



Regional Coordination Group
Mediterranean and Black Sea

Regional Coordination Group for the Mediterranean and Black Sea

RCG MED&BS REPORT 2021

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Acronyms

AR	Annual Report (of activities carried out by MS under the DCF)
CFP	Common Fishery Policy (EU)
CPC	GFCM Contracting Party
CR	Control Regulations (EU)
DCF	Data Collection Framework (follow up of DCR)
DC-MAP	Multi Annual Programme for Data Collection (follow up of DCF)
DG MARE	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (of the European Commission)
DTI	Data Transmission Issue
DTMT	Data Transmission Monitoring Tool
EC	European Commission
ECON	Economic issues
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Funds
EWG	STECF Expert Working Group
FDI	Fisheries Dependent Information (Data-call)
FPA	Fishing Partnership Agreement
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (FAO)
GSA	Geographical subarea
IATTC	Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
JRC	Joint Research Center (of the European Commission)
JSC	Joint Scientific Committees (of the FPA)
LDF	Long Distance Fisheries
LM	Liaison Meeting
LP	Large Pelagics
Med & BS	Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea
MS	Member State(s) (of the EU)
NA	North Atlantic
NC	National Correspondent for Data Collection
NP	National Programme (of activities carried out by MS under the DCF)
NS&EA	North Sea and Eastern Arctic
OP	Operational Programme
OST	Open Source Tools
PGCCDBS	Planning Group on Commercial Catches, Discards and Biological Sampling
PGECON	Planning Group on Economic Issues
PGMed	Mediterranean Planning Group for Methodological Development
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework
RCG	Regional Coordination Group
RGM	Regional Coordination Meeting





RDB	Regional Database (of the RCM)
RDB S.C.	Regional Data Base Steering Committee
RF	Recreational Fisheries
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
RoP	Rules of Procedure
RSP	Regional Sampling Plan
RWP	Regional Work Plan
SAC	GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries
SCRS	Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (ICCAT)
SDEF	Standard Data Exchange Format
STECF	Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries
TOR	Terms of Reference
WCPFC	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
WKPICS	ICES Workshop on the Practical Implementation of Statistical Sound Catch Sampling Programmes
WG SPF-AS	Working group for the coordination of data collection for small pelagic fish in the Adriatic Sea
WP	Work Plan for data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors





Executive summary

The Regional Coordination Group for Mediterranean and Black Sea (RCG Med&BS) took place virtually from the 7th to the 9th September 2021 online. The first day from the meeting (7th of September) was dedicated to meeting with End-users, followed by 2-day RCG meeting. The availability of SharePoint offered by ICES proved to be very efficient in organizing the work before, during and after the meeting.

The 5th RCG Med&BS was attended by the National Correspondents and/or their delegates from the countries of the competent area as follows: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, France, Italy, Malta, Romania, Slovenia and Spain. The RCG Med&BS meeting was attended also by the representatives of the DG MARE, GFCM Secretariat, the chairs of MEDITS and MEDIAS steering committees and Regional grants MARE/2020/08 coordinators.

In 2021 an official data call was launched by the chair of the RCG Med & BS, requesting data on landings, effort and value data for the period 2017-2020, for addressing the following:

- Review and update the landing template for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea;
- Ranking system for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

The relevant data call was announced on 3rd of August to all National Correspondents, with a deadline on the 3rd September 2021. The data was required to be submitted in two different data files similar to previous data calls.

Data were submitted by all Member States in the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea. The available data were reviewed by the chair, and clarifications on data values and coding were received whenever requested.

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During the meeting **13 recommendations** were made:

Recommendation 1 - Prioritization of stocks not included in stock assessment to check quality of Med&BS data for the Joint meeting of the RCG Med&BS, DG MARE, JRC and STECF on data quality and availability.

Recommendation 2 - Updating of the list of regional métiers and collaboration with ISSG on Métier issues.

Recommendation 3 - Joint workshop of RCG Med&BS and STREAMLINE on recreational fisheries.

Recommendation 4 - Joint workshop of RCG Med&BS and STREAMLINE on data needed to assess the impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem.

Recommendation 5 - Establishment of a Steering committee for the governance of the regional data base for fisheries data in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (Med&BS RDBFIS SC).

Recommendation 6 - Establishment of Technical group on the regional data base RDBFIS.

Recommendation 7 - Agreement on methodologies for data collection in recreational fisheries).

Recommendation 8 - Agreement on methodology for data collection on incidental catch of vulnerable species.

Recommendation 9 - WP Table 1.1. Data availability.

Recommendation 10 - WP Table 2.1. List of required species/stocks and WP Table 2.2. Planning of sampling for biological variables.





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Recommendation 11 - Recommendation on sampling plan improvement to certain MS following STECF data quality evaluation.

Recommendation 12 - Recommendation on expansion of MEDIAS to GSA 5 (Balearic Island) on a voluntary basis).

Recommendation 13 - Agreement on priority species and methodology for stomach sampling and analysis.

The Agenda, Terms of References and the participants' list are in Annex I, Annex II and Annex III respectively. Recommendations are listed in section 5 and they summarize the work, discussions and decisions of the RCG Med&BS 2019 and 2020. The official data call for 2020 is in Annex IV.

In 2021 the RCG Med&BS was co-chaired by Ms. Ivana Vukov and Mr. Jurgen Mifsud and in 2022 it will be co-chaired by Mr. Jurgen Mifsud and a delegate from Spain. If the COVID-19 pandemic situation and restrictions allow it, the 2022 RCG Med&BS can be a physical or hybrid meeting in Cyprus.





I. Terms of Reference

1. End-users Meeting – Data requirements and data transmission issues

- Identification of data needs, data issues and use of data by end-users.
- Collaborate with end-users to identify common and recurrent issues and prioritize actions to improve the quality of transmitted data and avoid data transmission failures.
- Propose ways to improve the communication and feedback on DTI.

2. DCF update

- Information from DG MARE on the new EU-MAP and Work Plan/Annual Report templates.
- Discuss on a collaborative approach for providing information in the new Work Plans (data availability, regional coordination, references to methodological guidelines in the Quality reports (Annex I.1), etc).

3. Regional data requirements

- STREAMLINE data call - update.
- RCG MED&BS data call - results; discussion on the purpose of the data call and use of data. MS were requested in 2021 to submit data on effort and landings by species métier for the period 2017-2020. Data is analyzed to provide a regional overview in order to assess if any changes need to be made to national sampling plans and incorporated in the revision of national work plans.

4. Recreational fisheries

- Review results of Workshop for Recreational fisheries in 2021. Discussion on list of species and methodologies for data collection according to new EU MAP.

5. Diadromous species

- Review of progress in 2021 at EU (RCG ISSG Diadromous) and GFCM level.

6. Métier issues

- Collaboration of RCG Med&BS and ISSG on Metier Issues was encouraged in Liaison meeting 2020 with the aim of standardizing the métier list and harmonizing codes (especially on mesh-size ranges) which will allow to avoid overlapping as well as apply similar methods and criteria on assigning metiers for fishing activities by Member States.
- A general workflow for assigning métiers was developed by ISSG on Metier Issues which set up a public repository on GitHub for storing reference lists, scripts, métier descriptions and documentation of procedures. R-script for assigning métiers to transversal data was developed and tested by the ISSG.
- The link to the métier work is: <https://github.com/ices-eg/RCGs/tree/master/Metiers>. This includes all the reports, reference lists and scripts developed.
- The reports are found under <https://github.com/ices-eg/RCGs/tree/master/Metiers/Reports> where the newest is Report RCG ISSG on Metier Issues 2021_20210428.pdf.





7. Impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem

- Update on results of Meeting on data needed to assess the impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem. The main objectives of this meeting were to review results of pilot studies, and to agree on collection of data according to the new EUMAP needed to assess the impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem from 2022 onwards, including data on:
 - by-catch of non-target species including PET species,
 - impacts of fisheries on marine habitats including vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), and
 - impacts of fisheries on food webs.
- Discussion on list of species and methodologies for data collection according to new EU MAP.

8. Scientific surveys

- MEDIAS, MEDITS, Black Sea surveys - review of 2020-2021 regional coordination, next steps and actions.

9. Cooperation with regional projects (MARE/2020/08 - Strengthening EU-MAP data collection by developing Regional Work Plans for the Regional Coordination Groups)

- STREAMLINE - Streamlining the establishment of regional work plans in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Update on progress (WPI, WP2, WP3).
- SECWEB - Supporting administrative tasks and online visibility to RCGs. Collaboration with the RCG's Secretariat to provide relevant information for the development of the website.
- Med&BS RDBFIS - Development of the regional database for the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Discussion on the proposal for a governance structure, data policy and accessibility.

10. Regional database

- Review progress in setting-up the regional database for the Med&BS - Feedback from the Steering Committee for the Med&BS Regional Database. Discussion on RDB structure and hosting options.

11. Impact of COVID-19 pandemic

- Update from MS on the impact of the pandemic on data collection activities (commercial sampling, surveys)





2. Progress report on ToRs

2.1. ToR I - End-users Meeting

ToR I included presentations by main end-users – EC and GFCM regarding data needs and use of data.

2.1.1 STECF outcomes (Alessandro Ligas)

1) The EWG 21-02 identified specific areas of poor data sampling and proposed the inclusion of these data in the upcoming national work plans. These areas are:

- a. Red mullet in GSA 1 and 6,
- b. Blue and Red shrimp in GSA 1, 6 and 7,
- c. Giant Red shrimp in GSA 9, 10 and 11.

The NC of IT and the representative of the ES NC responded positively to this request.

2) The RCG discussed the differences between total landing data by GSA and species supplied under Med and Black Sea, FDI and AER data calls that were highlighted during the EWG 21-02. The RCG proposed to have one data call, in order to overcome such issues. The future regional database could also address this issue.

3) The RCG was requested to discuss the possible stocks to be assessed by the STECF, as per STECF recommendation to have a general overview of the quality of the data collected by the MS under the Med & Black Sea data call, which are not currently assessed by the STECF. It was decided to organise a joint meeting between RCG, DG MARE, JRC and STECF to decide criteria and list of stocks to be dealt in a future EWG on data quality by end of year (before STECF bureau).

4) JRC (Zeynep Hekim) presented the updated guidelines of the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT) that were discussed in STECF summer Plenary 21-02. She further explained that the 2020 RCG recommendation to introduce an automatic notification procedure to MS, when a new issue is introduced in the DTMT, cannot be addressed, due to technical difficulties and to ensure the security of the system. It was commonly agreed that NCs can be notified by the contact point of relevant EWGs, once new issues are uploaded in the DTMT.

2.1.2 Data calls

JRC (Alessandro Mannini) and DG MARE (Venetia Kostopoulou) presented the **2021 Med&BS data call**, and reminded MS on the procedures and deadlines, as not all MS respected them this year.

On 22 June, the regional grant **MARE/2020/08 STREAMLINE** launched a **data call** for the case studies on the regional sampling of commercial fisheries. The received data will be quality checked, before running the optimisation tools for regional sampling.

On 20 August, the **RCG Med&BS data call** was launched, using the same format as in previous years. Every year, the RCG uses the data of the last 3 years to produce a ranking table, based on the landings, value and days at sea (effort), with a cut-off of 90%. This exercise results in the selection of metiers that MS have to sample. A concern was raised whether year 2020 should be included in this analysis, due to covid. Alessandro





Ligas proposed to change the focus of this exercise from regional to subregional, in order to identify areas suitable for regional sampling.

2.1.3 GFCM (Federico De Rossi)

Data requirements amounted up to around 80 data calls in 2021. The 2019 session of SAC agreed that, whenever possible, the stock assessments should be based on official data on fishing activities (Rec. GFCM/41/2017/6), while experts can decide on scientific data and assumptions. Nevertheless, experts participating in the stock assessment Working Groups are requested to give priority to the official data (when available).

Vjeko Ticina (HR) asked whether there is a legal basis to request data from individual scientists. Federico de Rossi replied that GFCM is not a legal instrument to request data from scientists, it is rather the CPCs that have the legal obligation to submit data based on GFCM Recommendations. In that respect, scientists are invited but not obliged to submit data to GFCM.

A ranking system of métiers at level 6 was performed at regional level (Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea - GSA29).

As in previous years, the ranking system applied was the one described in the old DCF Decision 2010/93/EU, according to which a ranking of the métiers is performed three times: firstly, according to their share in the total landings, secondly according to their share in the total value of the commercial landings and thirdly according to their share in the total effort (days at sea). For each ranking, the shares were cumulated starting with the largest, until a cut-off level of 90% was reached. At the end of the procedure, all métiers selected through each ranking were added.

Data used: Average data on landings, value and effort over the period 2017-2020 were used, which were received under the 2021 RCG Med&BS Data Call. For Greece, 2017 data were not available since the DCF was executed for a small period and only in a limited area; thus, 2018, 2019 and 200 data were used in the analysis because for these years there was a full coverage of time and areas.

The RCG decided to establish a data requirements registry, where MS will list every year all their data reporting obligations. This will help streamline data calls and avoid overlapping DDLs, as well as requesting the same data in different formats.

2.1.4 Data transmission (DT) issues

The RCG discussed data issues from the 2020 Med&BS and FDI data calls. There has been an increase in DT issues for the 2020 Med&BS data call, which can be attributed to the inclusion of Greek stocks and to effort variables. On the positive side, high severity issues are few. It is important to note that a lot of issues were addressed during the EWG 21-02. That being said, Alessandro Manini underlined that recurrent issues still exist and he invited MS to address DTMT issues in subsequent data submissions.

On what concerns GFCM, Federico de Rossi informed on the following DT issues for EU MS: timeliness issues (particularly for global figures and socio-economics, followed by effort), as well as consistency issues (i.e. formatting or incorrect units used).





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Progress report on ToRs

COM (Venetia Kostopoulou) noted that DG MARE Unit C3 is very interested in receiving end user feedback from GFCM, to improve the input in the DTMT. Federico de Rossi replied that, for the time being, GFCM collects information on the submission (timeliness), whereas information on content (coverage and quality) will be the next step in the process. Federico de Rossi also said that COM – as a CPC – is invited to formally ask GFCM to adjust procedures, in order to ensure end user feedback to COM.





2.2 ToR 2 – DCF update

Feedback from the Commission regarding the information on DCF legal framework and related legal acts. Ms Monika Sterczewska presented, on behalf of DG MARE, the relevant information in regards to this point, namely the new EU MAP and ongoing developments on the WP and AR templates.





2.3 ToR 4 – Recreational fisheries

The RCG acknowledged that the situation in recreational fisheries (RF) collection varies amongst MS. The previous RCG meeting on RF¹ made suggestions on how to improve the data collection in each MS and agreed on a list of species:

Adriatic	West Med	Central Med	East Med	Black Sea
<i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>	<i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>	<i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>	<i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>	
<i>Dentex dentex</i>	<i>Dentex dentex</i>	<i>Dentex dentex</i>	<i>Dentex dentex</i>	
<i>Epinephelus</i> spp.	<i>Epinephelus</i> spp.	<i>Epinephelus</i> spp.	<i>Epinephelus</i> spp.	
	<i>Diplodus</i> spp.	<i>Diplodus</i> spp.	<i>Diplodus</i> spp.	
<i>Sparus aurata</i>	<i>Sparus aurata</i>			
		<i>Pagellus erythrinus</i>	<i>Pagellus erythrinus</i>	
<i>Pomatomus saltatrix</i>				<i>Pomatomus saltatrix</i>
	<i>Seriola dumerili</i>			
			<i>Pagrus pagrus</i>	
				<i>Trachurus mediterraneus ponticus</i>
				<i>Mesogobius batrachocephalus</i>
				<i>Neogobius melanostomus</i>
				<i>Mugil cephalus</i>
				<i>Liza aurata</i>

Gobiidae

}

Mugilidae

}

However, a number of MS (IT, BG, GR, RO) argued that the pilot studies are not yet finalised, and it would be better to wait, before proposing a new list of species².

Ms Venetia Kostopoulou stressed the importance of agreeing on common methodologies, in order to strengthen the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) under the new EU MAP, and to agree on a list of species, since the current list of the EU MAP is not representative of the sea basin. COM would like to see MS making a different proposal from what is now in the WP. Ms Venetia Kostopoulou argued that MS have acquired experience and knowledge and, although the pilot studies are not finalized, MS should be in a position to make a new proposal. At any rate, once all RF pilot studies are finalized, COM expects that MS uptake the outcomes in their regular data collection activities.

The RCG decided to use the FAO handbook on RF³, which contains many different methodologies that MS can use. The RCG will revisit the list of species for RF next year, after the completion of all pilot studies. For the time being, the species list in EU MAP will apply.

¹ Meeting on 8-9 March 2021 and follow-up meeting on 9 April 2021.

² A list of species on RF exists in the new EU MAP, but MS and RCGs are invited to revise this list, based on the outcomes of pilot studies.

³ Handbook for data collection on recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: 669 | General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean - GFCM | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations | General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (fao.org)





2.4 ToR 6 - Métier issues

Josephine Egekvist presented on going work on métiers, done in the RCGs of the North (ISSG Metiers), in cooperation with RDBES and EWG FDI. She invited the RCG Med&BS to be part of this process.

The RCG Med&BS has to update the metiers list, also in view of the new EU MAP, as there is a need to allocate species to target assemblages and gears. Ms Charis Charilaou (CY) agreed and highlighted that the ranking table produced by the RCG contains the metier 'MISC' (miscellaneous), which has to be better defined. Ms Ivana Vukov (HR) brought to the attention of the RCG that métiers were problematic during the STECF EWG on the West Med, so there is a need for follow up.

The RCG agreed to collaborate with the ISSG on Métiers, to standardize métiers list, harmonise codes and to identify métiers at MS level.





2.5 ToR 7 – Impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem

There is a need to define high-risk métiers for bycatch monitoring. It is clear that MS cannot cover all métiers. Mr Alessandro Ligas proposed to use the list provided by GFCM as a starting point, the outcomes of pilot studies and the suggestions from the regional grants (STREAM and MARE/2014/19). He also stressed the importance of performing preliminary sampling at national level, including interviews with fishermen, to collect historical information. The proposed 0.5% coverage may not be enough for certain métiers and should be adjusted. Participant views converged to the selection of trawlers, as possible candidates. Ms Ivana Vukov mentioned the need to include more métiers, as this is required when exporting to the US. In addition, fisheries targeting PETs should be included.

The RCG decided to use the FAO manual on bycatch, which describes the minimum data to be collected. The methodology also includes a list of species, as per DCRF data requirements.

The RCG will organize a workshop for observers on identification and handling of PETs species.

The MS contested the need for data collection on stomach content, since end user needs are not well described. Ms Venetia Kostopoulou stressed the need to address EAFM and added that the new EU MAP anticipates future end user needs. She underlined that stomach content analysis is a data requirement in the new EU MAP, and MS need to include it in the WP.

The regional grant STREAM proposed the sampling of stomachs from commercial fisheries in a quarterly basis, as well as using MEDITS. Still, participants could not agree on which species to select for stomach content analysis, or on the frequency of data collection.

Ms Ivana Vukov proposed to set up a joint workshop with STREAMLINE on point 4 of EU MAP (on bycatch, habitats, stomach content) next year.

The RCG will agree on Recommendations for EU MAP sections that merit a regional approach, such as data availability, stock lists and quality assurance.





2.6 ToR 8 – Scientific surveys

Review of 2020 regional coordination (MEDITS, MEDIAS and Black Sea surveys). Next steps and actions.

2.6. 1. *MEDIAS (acoustic survey)*

The chair of the MEDIAS Coordination Group (Mr Vjeco Ticina) gave an overview. New activities (in 2019) include MEDIAS in GSA 11 and in Albania. ES announced that a new acoustic survey will take place in GSA 5.

The MEDIAS Group proposed to organize thematic workshops for biological analyses (age and maturity estimates) and to proceed with further harmonization, like intercalibration of vessels used and workload (size of geographical area to be covered and vessel days). Following a question from Mr Vjeco Ticina on the procedure to follow on updating Table I of MEDIAS handbook, Ms Venetia Kostopoulou replied that such technical aspects should be the subject of the MEDIAS Group; the RCG has no competence or technical expertise to run such an exercise. Ms Ivana Vukov agreed and proposed to update this information in the new WP. Regarding the need to have new vessels (MEDIAS is the only survey that needs a research vessel), Ms Venetia Kostopoulou replied that the EMFAF could be an opportunity to fund new research vessels.

2.6. 2. *MEDITS (trawl survey)*

The chair of the MEDITS Coordination Group (Mr George Tserpes) informed of upcoming activities: update of MEDITS reference taxonomic list, to include invasive species (issue raised by CY); establishment of a common protocol for benthos; guidelines on use of MEDITS data addressed to end users; update of MEDITS manual; typology of tools for standardization of MEDITS data.

Ms Ivana Vukov informed that, due to EEZ, some MEDITS stations previously sampled by IT, will now be sampled by HR.

2.6. 3. *Black Sea Surveys*

Bottom trawl surveys in BG

Ms Elitsa Petrova presented activities during 2020 and 2021, noting that turbot biomass shows a slight tendency to increase.

Pelagic trawl survey in BG

Mr Violin Raykov presented activities during 2020 and 2021, including stomach content analysis.

Bottom trawl and pelagic trawl surveys in RO

Mr George Tiganov presented activities during 2020 and 2021.





2.7 TOR 9 - Cooperation with regional projects (MARE/2020/08 - Strengthening EU-MAP data collection by developing Regional Work Plans for the Regional Coordination Groups)

2.7.1. STREAMLINE

Mr Antonio Cervantes presented the outcomes of Deliverable I 'Maps of existing elements and gaps'.

Proposed actions include:

- Online workshops on optimization of sampling effort, on growth and maturity.
- Decision making meeting to reach agreement on regional sampling plans.
- Define sampling units: resume the planning group of Med (PGMed) and consult at sub-regional level
- On stomach content: implementation of STREAM protocols (linked to RCG Recommendation 6 in 2019), discuss adequate number of stomachs to be analysed, online workshop on prey identification.
- On incidental by catch: training workshop on PETs covering all categories, agree on minimum and optimal level of observer coverage, explore alternative sampling approaches.
- On RF: follow GFCM methodologies, further work on list of species, on variables to be collected and on methodologies.

When MS were asked whether they are familiar and/or using the data quality checks developed by the previous regional grant STREAM, only CY, GR and IT replied positively. MT is currently testing them and ES has issues to implement them. The rest of the MS have not yet trialed them.

In October 2021, a workshop will take place to familiarize with R tools on sampling optimisation, followed by 5-6 virtual workshops with small groups of experts, to address case studies. The results will be ready by March 2022. In parallel, MS were asked to provide names for a network of experts on sampling optimization.

2.7.2. RDBFIS

Mr Stefanos Kavadas presented the milestones and achievements of RDBFIS. Following the discussions on compatibility issues between the future RDB Med & BS and RDBES, held at the last Steering Committee Meeting of the RDB Med & BS (12-13 July 2021), Mr Stefanos Kavadas presented a letter sent to the MS addressing concerns. Bilateral meetings with STREAMLINE and concerned MS also took place in the meantime. Mr Stefanos Kavadas assured MS that RDBFIS will include those RDBES hierarchies relevant to the Med and BS and it will contain both the COST tools and RDBES features. MS were invited to propose to the grant which hierarchies to include.

Mr Stefanos Kavadas informed participants that bilateral meetings with MS have taken place with CY, GR, HR, FR and IT. The rest of the MS were encouraged to meet with RDBFIS.

2.7.3. SECWEB

Ms Maria Perez presented the grant on the setting up of an RCG Secretariat and asked for RCG Med&BS input on the website and the questionnaire.





2.8 TOR 10 – Regional database

Ms Paola Carrara presented the proposal of the grant RDBFIS for the future Steering Committee (SC) of the RDB Med & BS. After long discussions, the following scheme was commonly agreed:

The Members of the SC will be:

- i. The Chair(s) of Med&BS RCG, without voting rights;
- ii. up to two representatives from each EU RCG Member State (MS) that wishes to attend; in case of voting, each MS would have one vote only;
- iii. up to two representatives from the European Commission, including JRC; in case of voting, the EC would have one vote only;
- iv. up to two representatives from GFCM, without voting rights;
- v. Chair invited guests; the Chair(s) of this SC can invite guests to attend a meeting of the SC as observers, on specific issues, without voting rights.

The new chair of the SC will be Alessandro Ligas.

In terms of hosting, Mr Federico de Rossi reiterated the GFCM's availability to host the RDB Med & BS, pending on official request coming from COM.

It was proposed to discuss cost options after the host is identified.





2.9 TOR 11 - Impact of COVID-19 pandemic

MS were asked whether they experienced delays or cancellations in their data collection activities due to covid. There were no delays in BG, FR, IT, GR (small delays beginning of year, but everything is covered), MT (slight delay with MEDITS survey), RO SI, ES. In HR, the SOLEMON survey was not carried out in 2020. In CY, there is no on-board sampling in 2021, but fishermen from trawlers keep samples from hauls.





3. Next venue and chairs

New chairs for next year: – Jurgen Mifsud (MT) and co-chair from ES (not defined yet).

2022 RCG Med&BS meeting: 6-9 September 2022 in CY.





4. AOB

4.1. RCG ECON proposal to have common Rules of Procedures

Mr Kolyo Zhelev presented the RCG ECON proposal to streamline the Rules of Procedures of all RCGs.



5. Recommendations from the RCG Med&BS 2021

Data quality and availability	
RCG MED & BS 2021 Recommendation I	Prioritization of stocks not included in stock assessment to check quality of Med&BS data for the Joint meeting of the RCG Med&BS, DG MARE, JRC and STECF on data quality and availability.
Justification	<p>In recent years, STECF EWGs on stock assessment have mainly targeted stocks in the Western Med, Adriatic and Ionian/Aegean Seas; for the remaining areas and stocks there is no information on the quality of the collected data. With regards to the Med & BS data call, the RCG Med & BS end user subgroup considered that quality checks by EWGs on stock assessments only cover stocks to be assessed and not the whole set of data reported in the data call. This creates unbalanced reporting on data issues among MS and puts some MS in an unfavourable position.</p> <p>COM proposed an ad hoc EWG to quality check the Med & BS data not currently scrutinized in STECF stock assessments. This EWG can use the outcomes of the EWG 21-02 and apply them to at least the priority stocks for each country, as well as agree on other possible quality checks to describe the level of completeness of data submitted to the DG MARE Med&BS data call.</p> <p>Following COM proposal, STECF considered that it could be beneficial to have a general overview of the quality of the data collected by the MS under the Mediterranean and Black Sea data call. Given the large number of species, GSA and country combinations, STECF considers that the number of data quality checks and number of species/GSA should be proportionate to the duration and workload of the EWG and therefore subject to some prioritization.</p> <p>In addition, there are several cases where the total landing data by GSA and species supplied under Med and Black Sea, FDI and AER data calls are not in agreement. The greatest differences are found between AER and the Med&BS/FDI calls, but there are some differences in some years across all data calls.</p> <p>STECF stresses that these issues had already been detected previously by different STECF EWGs, but there are no standardized procedures to report such discrepancies in the DTMT, since the data transmission issues are associated to a data call. STECF also notes that when differences between data call occur, it is not possible to know which data are accurate and which are not, so these issues must be treated by comparing the data procedures for each call.</p> <p>STECF suggested also that RCGs should be asked to discuss these differences and take necessary steps to explain or resolve them.</p>



RCG MED&BS 2021 REPORT

Recommendations from the RCG Med&BS 2021

Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MS should agree on criteria to identify priority stocks, which are currently not included in the stock assessments, which are to be considered in an ad hoc STECF EWG in 2022 to quality check the Med & BS data not currently scrutinized in STECF stock assessments. MS to identify priority species by GSA (stocks that are currently not included in the stock assessments). RCG Chairs to coordinate MS views and organize meeting. Discuss issues of public availability of data submitted through the EU Med&BS Data Call (including scientific surveys, e.g., MEDITS, MEDIAS, etc.). Discuss differences in landing data by GSA and species supplied under Med & BS, FDI and AER data calls. Analysis on stocks for which data are provided through EU Med&BS Data Call vs stocks used for stock assessment (Person in charge: Charis Charilaou).
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS, RCG Chairs, DG MARE, JRC and STECF Meeting chair: Alessandro Ligas
Time frame (Deadline)	Identification of priority stocks/GSA by MS: 1 st December 2021 Joint meeting: first half of December 2021, virtual
Comments	

Métier issues	
RCG MED & BS 2021 Recommendation 2	Updating of the list of regional métiers and collaboration with ISSG on Métier issues.
Justification	<p>Following LM 2020 recommendations, RCG Med&BS agreed to collaborate with ISSG on Métier Issues to update the métier list for Med&BS to be used in DG MARE and RCG Med&BS data calls, and to harmonize codes, which will allow to avoid overlapping and to apply similar methods and criteria on assigning metiers for fishing activities by MS.</p> <p>Furthermore, procedures for the identification of métiers at MS level should be explored with the aim of harmonizing the approach.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse the results of RCG Med&BS 2021 data call to check if the regional métier list needs to be updated. MS to provide detailed data on the landing, effort and landing value for miscellaneous metiers, if needed. RCG chairs to organize initial meeting with ISSG on Métier Issues. MS should ensure participation of national experts in the meeting and collaborate with the ISSG on Métier Issues.





RCG MED&BS 2021 REPORT

Recommendations from the RCG Med&BS 2021

Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG Chairs, MS
Time frame (Deadline)	End of 2021 and 2022
Comments	

Recreational fisheries	
RCG MED & BS 2021 Recommendation 3	Joint workshop of RCG Med&BS and STREAMLINE on recreational fisheries
Justification	<p>RCG Med&BS 2021 recommends to organize a joint workshop of RCG Med&BS and STREAMLINE on recreational fisheries to discuss methodologies and review the list of priority species for biological data collection with final results of pilot studies on a regional level.</p> <p>In line with Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2021/1167 MS should carry out statistically robust multispecies sampling schemes, allowing for catch quantities estimation for stocks in recreational fisheries, as a minimum for species listed in Table 4 of the Annex to the Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2021/1167, i.e. eel (including in fresh water), elasmobranchs and highly migratory ICCAT species.</p> <p>During the Workshop on recreational fisheries in 2021, MS presented results of pilot studies on recreational fisheries carried out under the DCF in the period 2017-2020. With the aim to create a common list of species for all countries, MS were asked to identify a list of priority species for data collection according to results of pilot studies and expert knowledge. Based on contributions from all MS, a list of priority species was identified at marine region level for which biological sampling is needed as recreational catches affect the development of fish stocks.</p> <p>Considering that pilot studies in recreational fisheries are not yet finalized and that stocks could not be prioritized in some MS in 2021, RCG Med&BS agreed that the list of priority species is to be updated after the finalization of pilot studies in all MS, and in accordance with end-user needs. Following RCG Med&BS agreement on the list of priority species, regional project STREAMLINE should consider the results of the workshop for the regional sampling plan.</p> <p>In addition, methodological approach should be consistent for all MS, independently of the waters in which the fishing activity takes place in order to avoid discrepancies between MS (establish minimum requirements).</p>





RCG MED&BS 2021 REPORT

Recommendations from the RCG Med&BS 2021

Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MS to provide updated information to the WS chairs on priority species in recreational fisheries by GFCM sub-region. WS RF 2022 ToR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the list of priority species by sub-region. Discuss on the harmonization of methodologies for data collection in recreational fisheries. Propose list of species, methodology and variables for biological data collection. Collaborate with STREAMLINE regional project on the regional sampling plan for recreational fisheries. Collaborate with RCG LP on sampling plan for large pelagic species.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS, RCG Chairs, WS chairs, STREAMLINE project coordinator WS chairs: Fabio Grati, Paraskevi (Voula) Karachle
Time frame (Deadline)	WS Dates: first quarter of 2022, virtual
Comments	

Marine ecosystem data	
RCG MED & BS 2021 Recommendation 4	Joint workshop of RCG Med&BS and STREAMLINE on data needed to assess the impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem
Justification	<p>Regional project STREAM (MARE/2016/22) proposed to the RCG Med&BS to address the regional needs for the collection of stomach contents, benthos and marine litter; identification of data needs; share knowledge and experience in the data collection. RCG Med&BS organized in 2021 the <i>Meeting on data needed to assess the impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem</i> involving relevant end-users (DG MARE, DG ENV, and GFCM), JRC, national experts as well as regional projects STREAMLINE and RDBFIS. It was concluded that further effort is needed to establish robust data collection for data needed to assess the impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem, including data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By-catch of non-target species including PET species, Impacts of fisheries on marine habitats including vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), and Impacts of fisheries on food webs.
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WS 2022 ToR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify high risk metiers by group of species for by-catch monitoring, taking into account the results of pilot studies. Compile a list of PET species according to regulations specified in Table 2 of the Annex to the Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2021/1167, taking into account GFCM DCRF list and JRCs MSFD list.





RCG MED&BS 2021 REPORT

Recommendations from the RCG Med&BS 2021

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Discuss on priority species and methodology for stomach sampling and analysis. – Discuss on the data and methods needed for the assessment of impact on seabed habitats, considering data sources from VMS, MEDITS and commercial fisheries. – Discuss on protocol for stomach sampling and analysis. – Include all relevant stakeholders (DG MARE, DG ENV, STECF, JRC, GFCM, RCG LP, ICES, STREAMLINE and RDBFIS).
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS, RCG chairs WS chairs: TBD (STREAMLINE)
Time frame (Deadline)	WS Dates: by April 2022, virtual
Comments	

Governance for the regional data base RDBFIS	
RCG MED & BS 2021 Recommendation 5	Establishment of a Steering committee for the governance of the regional data base for fisheries data in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (Med&BS RDBFIS SC)
Justification	RCG Med&BS in 2021 elected a new chair of the SC, Alessandro Ligas. Development of Med&BS RDBFIS by the Grant Med&BS RDB
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS to confirm/nominate SC members (2), DG MARE and GFCM to nominate members (2). • Med&BS RDBFIS SC in 2022 should agree on RDBFIS hosting, government policy and cost sharing from 2023. Membership rules in the SC has been agreed during RCG Annual meeting, while guidelines for its government and data policy in RDBFIS are drafted in documents under delivery by the Grant Med&BS RDB team, in view of RCG check and agreement.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS, DG MARE, GFCM Med&BS RDBFIS SC chair: Alessandro Ligas
Time frame (Deadline)	Med&BS RDBFIS SC meeting by July 2022
Comments	





Technical group on the regional data base RDBFIS	
RCG MED & BS 2021 Recommendation 6	Establishment of Technical group on the regional data base RDBFIS.
Justification	Steering committee for the regional database during its 4 th meeting in July 2021 agreed to establish a technical group to communicate with the regional project Med&BS RDBFIS (MARE/2020/08) regarding technical aspects of RDB development and to further support development of the regional database.
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of national experts in testing of RDBFIS. • Support to RDBFIS regional grant on specificities of Med&BS fisheries data, raising procedures etc.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS to nominate experts on a voluntary basis.
Time frame (Deadline)	End of 2021
Comments	

Methodology for data collection in recreational fisheries	
RCG MED & BS 2021 Recommendation 7	<p><u>Agreement on methodologies for data collection in recreational fisheries</u></p> <p>RCG MED&BS 2021 recommends implementing annual data collection in recreational fisheries by following methodologies described in the “Handbook for data collection on recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.” FAO, 2021:</p> <p>http://www.fao.org/gfcm/publications/series/technical-paper/669/en/</p> <p>MS should carry out statistically robust multispecies sampling schemes, allowing for catch quantities estimation for stocks in recreational fisheries, as a minimum for species included in Table 4 of the Annex to the Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2021/1167, i.e. eel (including in fresh water), elasmobranchs and highly migratory ICCAT species.</p> <p>RCG MED&BS 2021 also recommends to consider the work performed under the STREAM Project, and in particular the guidelines and protocols provided in Deliverables D5.1 and D5.2 (STREAM Final Report with embedded deliverables can be downloaded from the following website:</p>





	https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/mare-2016-22-strengthening-regional-cooperation
Justification	<p>The collection of recreational fisheries data as so far been limited in most EU MS, and the lack of reliable estimates of catch, effort and socio-economic data has led to the exclusion of recreational fisheries data from stock assessments, with implications for fisheries management.</p> <p>The GFCM Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) in 2021 has highlighted the potential issues posed by this lack of data, particularly for stocks which are overexploited by commercial fisheries and for which recreational fisheries might be an additional component of fishing mortality.</p> <p>In response, Handbook for data collection on recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (FAO, 2021) provides a clear methodological framework to allow Mediterranean and Black Sea countries to implement suitably harmonized sampling and survey monitoring schemes for recreational fisheries.</p> <p>The handbook establishes a minimum set of necessary information for monitoring recreational fisheries, while, at the same time, allowing for flexibility to accommodate national specificities and data collection needs. It also provides guidance on the data analysis process as well as advice to successfully engage stakeholders in the data collection process.</p> <p>Harmonized regional approach at the level of RCG Med&BS to data collection in recreational fisheries and a common framework for sampling methodology is needed to ensure that data collected is comparable among MS and in line with end-user needs and that data provided to end-users is of sufficient quality to support scientific advice and management.</p> <p>The Handbook for data collection on recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (FAO, 2021) and the guidelines produced under the STREAM grant provide a clear methodological framework to allow Med&BS countries to implement suitably harmonized sampling and survey monitoring schemes for recreational fisheries.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	MS should ensure that their national methodology is in line with methodologies described in the Handbook for data collection on recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and considering STREAM guidelines starting from 2022.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS
Time frame (Deadline)	By 15 th October 2021, each MS should prepare the WWP including the methodology for data collection according to the handbook.





Comments	
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Methodology for data collection on incidental catch of vulnerable species	
RCG MED & BS 2021 Recommendation 8	<p><u>Agreement on methodology for data collection on incidental catch of vulnerable species</u></p> <p>RCG MED&BS 2021 recommends implementing annual data collection on the incidental catch of vulnerable species by following methodologies described in the FAO methodology “Monitoring incidental catch of vulnerable species in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: methodology for data collection”.</p> <p>FAO, 2019: http://www.fao.org/gfcm/publications/series/technical-paper/640/en/</p>
Justification	
Follow-up actions needed	MS should ensure that their national methodology is in line with methodologies described in the FAO methodology starting from 2022.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS
Time frame (Deadline)	By 15 th October 2021, each MS should prepare the WP including the FAO methodology for data collection.
Comments	

Data availability and official data calls	
RCG MED & BS 2021 Recommendation 9	<p><u>WP Table I.I. Data availability</u></p> <p>RCG Med&BS 2021 agreed on common dates after which the data sets will be made available to the end users, and requests the relevant MS to refer to these when completing Table I.I. Data availability in their Work Plans. MS and end users are recommended to respect the relevant dates of availability, especially when official data calls are issued by DGMARE and deadlines are set.</p>





	<p>The agreed Table I.1 on data availability is an Annex to the RCG Med&BS 2021 report.</p> <p>RCG Med&BS 2021 reiterates previous recommendations to JRC/DG MARE on maintaining stable format of the official data calls, and requests that regional agreements on codes are respected.</p> <p>With regards to the JRC/DGMARE proposal on setting the deadlines of official data calls for the Mediterranean and Black Sea at earlier dates than the current ones, for allowing the associated STECF EWG meetings to convene earlier in the year, the group expressed its concern on the ability of the MS to respect more strict deadlines and on the implications this would have to the quality of the data provided. As an alternative solution, RCG Med&BS 2021 recommends DG MARE to shorten the data-handling procedure after the legal deadline of the data calls, for allowing the STECF EWG meetings associated with the data calls to convene no later than one calendar month after the deadline. Specifically, and in line with the data-handling procedure for STECF Expert Working Groups circulated by DG MARE, a two weeks period after the deadline (instead of two months in some cases) should be spent for data checks by JRC, followed by two weeks of operational deadline.</p>
<p>Justification</p>	<p>The regionally agreed availability dates of the different data-sets are based:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. On the time required for finalizing other related data (e.g. fishing activity data required for finalizing biological data), ii. The available resources (limited for some MS) for data handling, considering also the timing of DCF reporting obligations, iii. The required work for processing the data and ensuring their quality for their scientific use. <p>Fixed deadlines of the various official DG MARE data calls should be specified according to the agreed availability dates, for allowing MS to plan in advance the work required for meeting their obligations.</p> <p>The existence of different formats and codes for reporting DCF data through various Data Calls increases the workload of Member States to prepare and provide data according to each data requirement. It increases the risk of not complying with each requested coding and threatens the quality of information provided. Formats and valid codes of a data call may differ from year to year, obliging MS to resubmit the same data provided in previous years in accordance with the updated format and code requirements.</p> <p>By shortening the data-handling procedure after the legal deadline of official DG MARE data calls, STECF EWG meetings associated with the data calls may convene earlier in the year than they currently do, for providing management advice on due time, without setting the deadlines of official data calls for the Mediterranean and Black Sea at earlier dates.</p>
<p>Follow-up actions needed</p>	<p>Follow agreed availability dates by MS and end users.</p> <p>Respect recommendations on the format of data calls.</p>





Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS, JRC/DG MARE, end users
Time frame (Deadline)	Before launch of data calls
Comments	

List of stocks and planning of sampling for biological variables

RCG MED & BS 2021 Recommendation 10	<p><u>WP Table 2.1. List of required species/stocks and WP Table 2.2. Planning of sampling for biological variables</u></p> <p>The RCG MED&BS recommends that:</p> <p>All the species/stocks listed in Table 1 of the EU-MAP Delegated Decision annex, relevant for the Region “Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea”, as well as the species/stocks defined under ICCAT convention, should be included in Table 2.1 of MSs WP. Furthermore, if a species is included in Groups 1, 2 and 3 of the GFCM-DCRF (Annex A) but it is absent from Table 1 of the EU-MAP this species should also be included in the sampling plan for the relevant areas (GSAs) indicated in Annex A of GFCM-DCRF (Version: 20.1, 2018).</p> <p>Stratification of stocks for data collection should follow the structure followed all the previous years (Group 1, 2 and 3 species as adopted in the GFCM-DCRF 2018, Version: 20.1).</p> <p>Regarding the frequency of sampling for length and other biological variables, it should be in line with the approach, and the temporal stratification, as identified in the adopted GFCM-DCRF.</p> <p>Length data should be reported yearly for all the species included in Groups 1, 2 and 3 of the GFCM-DCRF (Annex A).</p> <p>Other biological parameters (including age, weight, sex, and maturity) shall be reported yearly for Group 1 species (as identified in the GFCM-DCRF Annex A.1) and every three years for Group 2 species (as identified in the GFCM-DCRF Annex A.2) and <i>Anguilla anguilla</i> (eel). Other biological information (weight, sex and maturity), for all the species included in Group 3 species (as identified in the GFCM-DCRF Annex A.3), should be reported through the research surveys at sea when caught.</p>
Justification	In order the data collection for EU MAP to be in line with the approach indicated in the adopted GFCM DCRF.
Follow-up actions needed	MS to adopt this approach when compiling their WPs
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS





RCG MED&BS 2021 REPORT

Recommendations from the RCG Med&BS 2021

Time frame (Deadline)	15 th of October 2021
Comments	

Sampling plan improvements

RCG MED & BS 2021 Recommendation II	Recommendation on sampling plan improvement to certain MS following STECF data quality evaluation.
Justification	<p>STECF addressed the quality of data provided according to the DG MARE Med&BS data call and suggested to certain MS to improve the sampling plan for biological variables (EWG 21-02 report).</p> <p>According to recommendation of STECF EWG 21-02, MS should incorporate changes in national work plans/sampling plans for areas linked to the specific end-user needs for stock assessment, were identified as specific areas where sampling for a specific species is currently poor for an important métier and giving rise to potential errors in the stock assessment if the LFDs from this métier are different from other sampled métiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Red mullet in GSA 1 and 6</u>: The importance of sampling the LFDs of discards, particularly for the trawl fleet, should be stressed for the purposes of assessing catch; improved sampling of discards would improve these assessments. • <u>Blue and Red shrimp in GSA 1, 6 and 7</u>: Since the métier OTB-MDD, which is not mandatory for sampling in the current work plan, is contributing consistently to the total landings (around 30% in GSA 6) of this species, it would be worth evaluating the feasibility of including the sampling of this métier in future Spanish national WPs. • <u>Giant Red shrimp in GSA 9, 10 and 11</u>: is observed to have significant landings in several OTB métiers, but OTB-DWS is often not sampled, particularly in GSA 9 and 11. Currently sampling for this species in these areas is not mandatory under the Italian WP. Consideration should be given to duplicating sampling or splitting existing sampling across the métiers in future Italian WPs.
Follow-up actions needed	MS to adopt this approach when compiling their WPs
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS (Italy and Spain)
Time frame (Deadline)	15 th of October 2021
Comments	





Expansion of MEDIAS to GSA 5 (Balearic Islands)	
RCG MED & BS 2021 Recommendation 12	Recommendation on expansion of MEDIAS to GSA 5 (Balearic Island) on a voluntary basis.
Justification	According to the recommendation of MEDIAS steering committee in 2021 (Report of 14th meeting for MEDiterranean International Acoustic Surveys), MS is encouraged to expand MEDIAS to GSA 5 (Balearic Islands) on a non-mandatory basis and considering RCM MED&BS 2017, Larnaca; Rec No. 10 on introduction on new surveys (additional resources), i.e. introduction of new survey should not compete for resources with ongoing surveys in GSA 1 and GSA 6.
Follow-up actions needed	If possible, MS to include changes when compiling the WVP.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS (Spain)
Time frame (Deadline)	15 th of October 2021
Comments	

Stomach sampling	
RCG MED & BS 2021 Recommendation 13	<p><u>Agreement on priority species and methodology for stomach sampling and analysis</u></p> <p>RCG Med&BS recommends to introduce stomach sampling for the main stock identified by regional project MARE/2014/19 Med&BS D3.3, e.g. European hake in Mediterranean GSAs and turbot in the Black Sea.</p> <p>MS should align the sampling methodology according to MARE/2016/22 STREAM D4.1 (<i>Updated protocols and guidelines for collection, processing and analysis of stomach contents</i>) and implement stomach sampling for identified species during bottom trawl surveys (MEDITS and Black Sea demersal surveys).</p> <p><u>Minimum sample size for European hake in the Med (STREAM D4.1. Table 3.4.1.):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bottom trawl surveys: 20 full stomachs by per size class/life stage should be analysed by GSA if applicable.





	<p><u>Minimum sample size for Turbot in the Black Sea:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bottom trawl surveys: A total of 30 individuals per year should be analysed (15 from the spring survey and 15 from the autumn survey). <p>Sampling plan may be revised in the future, according of the results of the analysis of the stomachs content. Therefore, the sampling strategy and the sampling effort could be refined in order to minimize the variability of the estimates of the food spectra and to properly consider all the factors influencing the variations in diet composition.</p>
Justification	<p>In line with Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2021/1167, MS should carry out data collection on the impact of fishing activities on food webs, including stomach sampling and analysis.</p> <p>Consultations were carried out with MS for the identification of species for stomach sampling. STREAM designed a sampling program for the collection of data on stomach content of fish. Considering results of regional projects MARE/2014/19 and MARE/2016/22 STREAM D4.1., MS agreed in 2021 to carry out stomach sampling for the main species identified, starting from 2022.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	MS should prepare the WP according to the agreement.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MS
Time frame (Deadline)	By 15 th October 2021
Comments	





RCG MED&BS 2021 REPORT

Annexes

Annexes

Annex I: Meeting agenda

Tuesday, 7 Sept DAY 1 - End-users Meeting				Presenter	Docs & Links	ToR
Time (CET)	Duration	Topic				
9:00-9:30	30 min	Testing				
09:30	30 min	Welcome and introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> House rules, adoption of the agenda and ToR 	Chairs			
10:00	60 min	Data requirements and data transmission issues <p>European Commission - Identification of data needs in 2021 and use of data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule of datacalls (Med&BS and FDI) Relevant STECF working groups – stock assessments (EWG 21-11, EWG 21-15), FDI (EWG 21-10 & EWG 21-12) and fishing effort regime (EWG 21-13) Changes in data formats and codifications Data quality checking procedures and communication with MS - progress in 2021 (JRC coverage reports, EWG 21-02) Procedures for the Med&BS datacall Discussion in plenary	Alessandro Mannini (JRC) Zeynep Hekim (JRC) DG MARE	Data Calls STECF EWGs EWG 21-02 Data handling procedures	ToR 1	
11:00-11:15	15 min	Coffee break				
11:15	45 min	DTMT - Data transmission issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated DTMT guidelines Overview of data transmission issues reported in the DTMT in 2020 and results of STECF EWG 21-09 Discussion in plenary	Zeynep Hekim (JRC) Ivana Vukov	Confidential file available to NCS	ToR 1	
12:00	60 min	GFCM - Identification of data needs, data issues and use of data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant GFCM data submission obligations and related data quality indicators Data transmission issues and procedures to revise/update data Schedule of relevant working groups and stock assessments Outcomes of GFCM SAC 2021 and new GFCM requirements in relation to data collection Discussion in plenary	Federico De Rossi (GFCM)	Data submissions calendar	ToR 1	
13:00-14:00	60 min	Lunch break				
14:00	60 min	DCF update <p>New EU-MAP and Work Plan/Annual Report templates</p> Discussion in plenary	DG MARE		ToR 2	
15:00	30 min	Regional data requirements <p>STREAMLINE 2021 data call</p> <p>Contributions from MS, inconsistencies and use of data</p> Discussion in plenary	Isabella Bitetto		ToR 3	
15:30-15:45	15 min	Coffee break				
15:45	30 min	RCG Med&BS 2021 data call <p>Regional analysis of landing, effort and landing value by species and métier</p> Discussion in plenary	Chairs		ToR 3	
16:15	45 min	Conclusions - Identification of main issues and possible steps forward	All			
17:00		END OF DAY 1				
Wednesday, 8 Sept DAY 2 - Update on activities carried out in 2021						
Time (CET)	Duration	Topic	Presenter	Docs & Links	ToR	
9:00-9:30	30 min	Testing/Chat				
09:30	90 min	Recreational fisheries <p>RCG Med&BS Workshop on Recreational Fisheries – list of species and methodologies</p> Discussion in plenary	Fabio Grati	Report in ICES Sharepoint	ToR 4	
11:00	30 min	Diadromous species <p>Review of progress in 2021 at EU (RCG ISSG Diadromous) and GFCM level</p> Discussion in plenary	Argyrios Sapounidis		ToR 5	
11:30-11:45	15 min	Coffee break				
11:45	45 min	Métier Issues <p>Intersectoral Sub Group on Métier Issues</p> Discussion in plenary	Josefine Egekvist	Project documentation	ToR 6	
12:30-13:30	60 min	Lunch break				
13:30	90 min	Impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem <p>Meeting on data needed to assess the impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem - list of species and methodologies</p> <p>Assessing fisheries impacts on the seafloor: A methodological framework applied on the Greek fisheries</p> Discussion in plenary	Chairs Irida Maina		ToR 7	
15:00-15:15	15 min	Coffee break				
15:15	60 min	Scientific surveys - Review of 2020-2021 regional coordination, next steps and actions <p>MEDIAS</p> <p>MEDITS</p> <p>Black Sea surveys</p>	Vjekoslav Ticina George Tserpes	Report in ICES Sharepoint	ToR 8	
16:15	30 min	Regional grants MARE/2020/08 <p>SECWEB</p> <p>Supporting administrative tasks and online visibility to RCGs</p> Discussion in plenary	RCG's Secretariat	SECWEB webpage RCG's webpage	ToR 9	
16:45	15 min	Summary - Identification of main issues and possible steps forward	All			
17:00		END OF DAY 2				
Thursday, 9 Sept DAY 3 - Update on activities carried out in 2021, Agreements & Recommendations						
Time (CET)	Duration	Topic	Presenter	Docs & Links	ToR	
9:00-9:30	30 min	Testing/Chat				
09:30	90 min	Regional grants MARE/2020/08 - continued <p>STREAMLINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compiling information and identifying gaps - presentation of results (WP 1) Expectations and basis for regional sampling plan, bycatch of vulnerable species and recreational fisheries (WP 2) Procedures for meter sampling optimization, scientific network and organization of training workshops (WP 2) Decision-making structure for the regional sampling plan (WP 3) Discussion in plenary	Alessandro Ligas Isabella Bitetto	STREAMLINE webpage	ToR 9	
11:00-11:15	15 min	Coffee break				
11:15	60 min	RDBFIS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline of the project RDBFIS and milestones Results of the RDBFIS bilateral meetings with MS Med&BS RDB governance, data policy and access Discussion in plenary	Stefanos Kavadas Paola Carrara, Martina	Med&BS RDBFIS webpage Proposal in ICES SharePoint	ToR 9	
12:15	30 min	Regional database <p>Feedback from the Steering Committee for the Med&BS Regional Database (RDB SC Med&BS)</p> Discussion in plenary	Stefanos Kavadas	SC Med&BS RDBFIS letter (ICES SharePoint)	ToR 10	
12:45-13:45	60 min	Lunch break				
13:45	15 min	Impact of COVID-19 pandemic <p>Update on SARS-CoV2 effects on data collection in 2021 (commercial sampling and surveys)</p>	NCS		ToR 11	
14:00	120 min	RCG Med&BS Agreements and Recommendations <p>Follow-up on RCG Med&BS 2020 recommendations</p> <p>Agreement on RCG Med&BS 2021 recommendations</p>	Chairs, NCS, All	Recommendations 2020		
16:00-16:15	15 min	Coffee break				
16:15	45 min	RCG chairing in the next 5-year period (2022-2026) - agreement on MS rotation RCG meeting calendar in 2022 (chairs, dates, venues, ToRs) Participation in RCG Decision meeting Rules of Procedure – proposal of RCG ECON on common RoP for all RCGs	NCS Kolyo Zhalev	Proposal for 2022-2026		
17:00		END OF THE MEETING				





Annex II: Terms of Reference

ToR	Title	Description
1	End-users Meeting - Data requirements and data transmission issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of data needs, data issues and use of data by end-users. • Collaborate with end-users to identify common and recurrent issues and prioritize actions to improve the quality of transmitted data and avoid data transmission failures. • Propose ways to improve the communication and feedback on DTI.
2	DCF update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from DG MARE on the new EU-MAP and Work Plan/Annual Report templates. • Discuss on a collaborative approach for providing information in the new Work Plans (data availability, regional coordination, references to methodological guidelines in the Quality reports (Annex 1.1), etc).
3	Regional data requirements	<p>STREAMLINE data call - update.</p> <p>RCG MED&BS data call - results; discussion on the purpose of the data call and use of data.</p> <p>MS were requested in 2021 to submit data on effort and landings by species métier for the period 2017-2020. Data is analyzed to provide a regional overview in order to assess if any changes need to be made to national sampling plans and incorporated in the revision of national work plans.</p>
4	Recreational fisheries	Review results of Workshop for Recreational fisheries in 2021. Discussion on list of species and methodologies for data collection according to new EU MAP.
5	Diadromous species	Review of progress in 2021 at EU (RCG ISSG Diadromous) and GFCM level.
6	Métier issues	<p>Collaboration of RCG Med&BS and ISSG on <u>Metier Issues</u> was encouraged in Liaison meeting 2020 with the aim of standardizing the métier list and harmonizing codes (especially on mesh-size ranges) which will allow to avoid overlapping as well as apply similar methods and criteria on assigning metiers for fishing activities by Member States.</p> <p>A general workflow for assigning métiers was developed by ISSG on Metier Issues which set up a public repository on GitHub for storing reference lists, scripts, métier descriptions and documentation of procedures. R-script for assigning métiers to transversal data was developed and tested by the ISSG.</p> <p>The link to the métier work is: https://github.com/ices-eg/RCGs/tree/master/Metiers. This include all the reports, reference lists and scripts developed.</p> <p>The reports are found under https://github.com/ices-eg/RCGs/tree/master/Metiers/Reports where the newest is Report RCG ISSG on Metier Issues 2021_20210428.pdf.</p>
7	Impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem	<p>Update on results of Meeting on data needed to assess the impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem. The main objectives of this meeting were to review results of pilot studies, and to agree on collection of data according to the new EUMAP needed to assess the impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem from 2022 onwards, including data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by-catch of non-target species including PET species, • impacts of fisheries on marine habitats including vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), and • impacts of fisheries on food webs. <p>Discussion on list of species and methodologies for data collection according to new EU MAP.</p>
8	Scientific surveys	MEDIAS, MEDITS, Black Sea surveys - review of 2020-2021 regional coordination, next steps and actions.
9	Cooperation with regional projects (MARE/2020/08 - Strengthening EU-MAP data collection by developing Regional Work Plans for the Regional Coordination Groups)	<p>STREAMLINE - Streamlining the establishment of regional work plans in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Update on progress (WP1, WP2, WP3).</p> <p>SECWEB - Supporting administrative tasks and online visibility to RCGs. Collaboration with the RCG's Secretariat to provide relevant information for the development of the website.</p> <p>Med&BS RDBFIS - Development of the regional database for the Mediterranean and Black Seas.</p> <p>Discussion on the proposal for a governance structure, data policy and accessibility.</p>
10	Regional database	<p>Review progress in setting-up the regional database for the Med&BS - Feedback from the Steering Committee for the Med&BS Regional Database.</p> <p>Discussion on RDB structure and hosting options.</p> <p>Appointment of new chair of Steering Committee.</p>
11	Impact of COVID-19 pandemic	Update from MS on the impact of the pandemic on data collection activities (commercial sampling, surveys)





Annex III: List of Participants

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Annex IV: RCG Med&BS – 2021 Data Call

In accordance with the EU DCF (Regulation (EU) 2017/1004), the RCG chairs of the Med&BS herewith ask Member States to provide data at DCF level 6 **by September 3rd 2021 at the latest**. The characteristics of the data required are described below.

Content

The 2021 data call requests data for the **period 2017-2020** and is based on tables used in the past by the RCG Med&BS, for addressing Ranking system of métiers for Med&BS and Landing template for Med&BS. At the level of the RCG Med&BS it will be decided which three year average reference values (avg. 2017-2019 or avg. 2018-2020) should be relevant taking into account the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020.

Please note that the species list is updated. Species requested in the Landings template are in accordance with species list for the RCG Med&BS (Table I, Annex to the Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2021/1167).

The simplified SDEF format organized in three tables dedicated to Landings, Efforts, Sampling for addressing issues related to sampling optimization and quality is not requested in 2021, to avoid duplication of data provided under the regional project STREAMLINE (MARE/2020/08).

More specifically, the data call addresses the following:

RCG Med&BS Data Call Content	Data required	Data file	Species
Ranking system for the Mediterranean and for the Black Sea	Landings, Effort, Value	Ranking_Med&BS Table_2021 RCMMEDBS Data Call	All species landed (combined)
Review and update the landing template for the Mediterranean and for the Black Sea	Landings	Landings template_2021 RCMMEDBS Data Call	Species included in Landings template

Detailed data and table descriptions are provided in the relevant data files.

Feedback and data transmission

Data should be sent by mail to the RCG Med&BS chairs (e-mail addresses below) in xlsx format. Detailed instructions are in the templates. If any technical difficulty is encountered to provide the data, please contact the chairs.

Note that data submitted will only be used for the purpose of the working group and will not be stored in any database. Outputs from the ToRs will be in the form of tables containing aggregated data, as it was the case the previous years.

We look forward to your cooperation.

3/8/2021

Ivana VUKOV, chair RCG Med&BS 2021, ivana.vukov@mps.hr
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Landings template for 2021 RCG MED&BS Data Call (for years 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020)

Member State:						Landing weight (tons)				2017-2019	2018-2020
Region	Species (common name)	Species (scientific name)	Species FAO code	GFCM sub-region	Notes	2017	2018	2019	2020	Average landings (t)	Average landings (t)
Black Sea	Pontic shad	Alosa immaculata	SHC	GSAs 28-29						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	European Eel	Anguilla anguilla	ELE	GSAs 1-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Transparent goby	Aphia minuta	FIM	GSAs 9, 10, 16 and 19						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Giant red shrimp	Aristaeomorpha foliacea	ARS	GSAs 1-16, 19-21 and 22-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Red shrimp	Aristeus antennatus	ARA	GSAs 1-16, 19-21 and 22-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Sand smelts nei	Atherina spp.	AVX	GSAs 9, 10, 16 and 19						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Boogie	Boops boops	BOG	GSAs 1-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Blue crab	Callinectes sapidus	CRB	GSAs 8-10, 11, 2, 12-16, 18-21						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Striped Venus clam	Chamelea gallina	SVE	GSAs 17-18						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Sardinia coral	Corallium rubrum	COL	GSAs 1-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Dolphinfish	Coryphaena hippurus	DOL	GSAs 12-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Sea bass	Dicentrarchus labrax	BSS	GSAs 1-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Annular seabream	Diplodus annularis	ANN	GSAs 12-16, 19-21						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Horned/curled octopus	Eledone cirrhosa	FOI	GSAs 1-23						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Musky octopus	Eledone moschata	EDT	GSAs 8-23						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea	Anchovy	Engraulis encrasicolus	ANE	GSAs 1-29						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Grey gurnard	Eutrigla gurnardus	GUG	GSAs 13-16, 18-23						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Blackmouth catshark	Galeus melastomus	SHO	GSAs 1-11						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Squids nei	Illex spp., Todarodes spp.		GSAs 1-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Silver-cheeked toadfish	Lagocephalus sceleratus	LFZ	GSAs 1-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Common squid	Loligo vulgaris	SQR	GSAs 1-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Black-bellied angler	Lophius budegassa	ANK	GSAs 1-16, 19-21; 22-23						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Anglerfish	Lophius piscatorius	MON	GSAs 1-16, 18-23						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Black Sea	Whiting	Merlangius merlangus	WHG	GSAs 28-29						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Hake	Merluccius merluccius	HKE	GSAs 1-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Blue whiting	Micromesistius poutassou	WHB	GSAs 1-11, 22-23						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Grey mullets	Mugilidae	MUL	GSAs 8-10, 11, 2, 12-23						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea	Red mullet	Mullus barbatus	MUT	GSAs 1-29						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Striped red mullet	Mullus surmuletus	MUR	GSAs 1-16, 19-21 and 22-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Norway lobster	Nephrops norvegicus	NEP	GSAs 1-21						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Common octopus	Octopus vulgaris	OCC	GSAs 1-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Blackspot seabream	Pagellus bogaraveo	SBR	GSAs 1-11						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Common pandora	Pagellus erythrinus	PAC	GSAs 1-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Deepwater rose shrimp	Parapenaeus longirostris	DPS	GSAs 1-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Caramote prawn	Penaeus kerathurus	TGS	GSAs 22-23						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Blue crab	Portunus segnis	QSO	GSAs 8-10, 11, 2, 12-16, 18-21						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Devil firefish	Pterois miles	UHQ	GSAs 1-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Mediterranean starry ray	Raja asterias	JRS	GSAs 1-11						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Thornback ray	Raja clavata	RIC	GSAs 1-16, 19-21						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Black Sea	Rapa whelk	Rapana venosa	RPW	GSAs 28-29						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Sardine	Sardina pilchardus	PIL	GSAs 1-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Round sardinella	Sardinella aurita	SAA	GSAs 1-16, 19-21 and 22-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Lizardfish	Saurida lessepsianus	SZS	GSAs 22-27	The species is not currently present in the Aquatic Sci					#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Brushtooth lizardfish	Saurida undosquamis	LIB	GSAs 22-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Atlantic chub mackerel	Scomber colias	VMA	GSAs 1-11, 22-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Mackerel	Scomber scombrus	MAC	GSAs 1-16, 19-21						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Black Sea	Turbot	Scophthalmus maximus	TUR	GSAs 28-29						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Cuttlefish	Sepia officinalis	CTC	GSAs 1-21						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Dusky spinefoot	Siganus luridus	IGU	GSAs 22-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Marbled spinefoot	Siganus rivulatus	SRI	GSAs 22-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Common sole	Solea solea (Solea vulgaris)	SOL	GSAs 17-18, 22-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Gilthead sea bream	Sparus aurata	SBG	GSAs 7, 22-23						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	European barracuda	Sphyræna sphyraena	YRS	GSAs 12-16, 19-21						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Black Sea	Picarel	Spicara smaris	SPC	GSAs 17-18, 22-27						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Black Sea	European sprat	Sprattus sprattus	SPR	GSAs 28-29						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Picked dogfish	Squalus acanthias	DGS	GSAs 28-29						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea	Mantis shrimp	Squilla mantis	MTS	GSAs 17-18						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Mediterranean horse mackerel	Trachurus mediterraneus	HMM	GSAs 1-29						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea	Blue jack mackerel	Trachurus picturatus	JAA	GSAs 1-11						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea	Atlantic horse mackerel	Trachurus trachurus	HOM	GSAs 1-29						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	Poor cod	Trisopterus minutus	POD	GSAs 1-29						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea	Clams	Veneridae	CLV	GSAs 6, 13-21						#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Mediterranean Sea	All commercial sharks, rays and skates *	Selachii, Rajidae		GSAs 1-29	* To be reported at species level					#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!

Format:

Landings	
Field name	Description
Total landings (t)	landing in tons





Annex V: Presentations

It is a separate file

