



RCGs Secretariat



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Regional Coordination Groups 2024 Decision Meeting

DECISIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



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Background

The 2024 RCGs Decision Meeting took place in the Centre Albert Borschette, Brussels, Belgium as a hybrid meeting, on the 25th of September 2024.

The Decision Meeting is the Regional Coordination Groups decision forum, where the RCG chairs present to the national correspondents the recommendations and decisions coming from the RCGs for their endorsement. The recommendation and decisions are the result from the intersessional work carried out throughout the year and in particular the outputs from the RCGs annual technical meetings.

The six Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs): RCG Baltic; RCG North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic (NANSEA); RCG Mediterranean and Black Sea (Med&BS); RCG Long Distance Fisheries (LDF); RCG Large Pelagics (LP); RCG Economic Issues (ECON) were represented in the meeting by their respective RCG chairs. Member States were represented by the Data Collection Framework national correspondents, and DG MARE unit C3 participated in the meeting as the Commission representative. The RCGs Secretariat facilitated the meeting. The list of participants in Annex II.

After opening of the meeting, the draft agenda was adopted by the participants.

According to the RCGs Rules of Procedure, National Correspondents of the Member States shall unanimously agree by consensus on adopting a Regional Work Plan or any other relevant data collection activities. Therefore, the procedure for the endorsement of the RCGs decisions was established as follows:

- The RCGs decisions are presented by the RCG chairs.
- National correspondents only to indicate if not in agreement with a decision.
- In the case of RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic, the vote from a MS is valid for both regions.

Agenda

The 2024 decision meeting agenda was the following:

Time	Duration	Topic
14:30	10 min	Welcome of participants and adoption of the agenda (RCGs Secretariat, Rosa Fernández)
14:40	20 min	Decisions from RCG ECON (Eirini Tzouramani)
15:00	25 min	Decisions from RCG LDF (Maksims Kovšars)
15:25	20 min	Decisions from RCG LP (Jurgen Mifsud)
15:45	20 min	Decisions from RCG Med&BS (Charis Charilaou)
16:05	15 min	<i>Health break</i>
16:20	30 min	Decisions from RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic (Josefine Egekvist, Rita Vasconcelos, Maciej Adamowicz)
16:50	10 min	AOB
17:00	10 min	Wrap-up of the meeting
17:10		Closure

I. RCG ECON – Recommendations

In the following pages the recommendations from RCG ECON 2024 Technical meeting are presented. Further details can be found on the 2024 technical meeting report.

https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Report_RCG-ECON_TM-2024_final_2024_09_08.pdf

RCG ECON – Participating countries

Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands; Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia

RCG ECON – Decisions and recommendations

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Recommendation 01. Feedback from ISSG Evaluation of Quality Assurance Framework	
ECON_2024_R01	For comparing quality reports, EUROSTAT's experience will be valuable for MS in homogenising the presentation of the annexes and improving quality and transparency. RCG ECON chairs and ISSG on the Quality Assurance Framework will contact EUROSTAT to start this exercise with the aquaculture case.
TOR I	Feedback from ISSG Evaluation of Quality Assurance Framework
Justification	<p>To follow recommendation 12, decided in the RCGECON 2023 for organising an ISSG on quality assurance framework and reporting best practices, the meeting was held from March 18 to 20, 2024, in Salerno. During the meeting, current DCF quality reporting elements were discussed and compared to the European Statistical System (ESS) handbook for quality reports and the ESS Reference Metadata Reporting Standards. The discussion revealed that quality assessment is an ongoing process for continuous improvement. Interesting points were also mentioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There is a need for transparency and easy access to quality and metadata information for users, facilitating comparative analysis between countries and indicating responsibility for data collection with provisions for user feedback. – There is Inconsistent Terminology: Quality Report [annex 1.2 of the work plans] is a Planning Report – Quality reports should be made available as standalone documents in a web repository or through open access to the DCF platform. The basic statistical rule is “no data without metadata”.
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCG ECON chairs and ISSG on the Quality Assurance Framework will contact EUROSTAT to start this exercise with the aquaculture case.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCG ECON and ISSG chairs
Time frame (Deadline)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

Recommendation 02. Data needs to support the energy transition on EU fisheries and aquaculture	
ECON_2024_R02	In order to enhance exchange of methodologies used to gather data on energy consumption in fisheries and aquaculture, a session in the upcoming ISSG on methodological issues should be committed to the comparison of data collection procedures and estimation procedures for energy use in both fisheries and aquaculture
TOR 4	Data needs to support the energy transition on EU fisheries and aquaculture
Justification	In view of the EC communication on the energy transition in fisheries and aquaculture, the Commission requested RCG ECON to investigate the current status of the collection of data on fuel/energy consumption and the potential to extend this collection to include more details on the fuel/energy use. An inventory of data collection for energy consumption send to the MS has shown a wide variety in the detail in which data on fuel/energy consumption is gathered. As such there might be potential to improve methodologies for collection and processing the data for fuel/energy consumption. Within her mandate RCG ECON can facilitate this improvement by fostering the exchange of methods and best practices and by developing guidelines for MS for both data gathering and processing and for quality reporting. End users such as STECF and the European Commission can use this information to evaluate the quality of the data and procedures.
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to facilitate the exchange of methodologies to gather data on fuel/energy consumption in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, RCG ECON will organise a session on energy use in the upcoming ISSG on methodological issues.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCG ECON chairs
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before RCG ECON TM 2025
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

Recommendation 03. Feedback from the STECF EWG Social & ICES Social	
ECON_2024_R03	RCG ECON recommends establishing an ISSG on social aspects, especially to discuss social indicators and determine the practical issues regarding data collection, availability, and the timeline for adjusting the National Plans accordingly.
TOR 5	Feedback from the STECF EWG Social & ICES Social
Justification	<p>To follow recommendation 11, decided in the RCG ECON 2023, the working groups of STECF and ICES, concerned with developing the social variables to support the social dimension of the CFP by providing analytical tools, proposed developing a set of new social indicators. The EWG 24-05 assessed the status of the (potential) indicators. The indicators have been informed by the policy priorities identified by the DG-MARE in 2023 and the stakeholder consultation developed in 2024.</p> <p>The indicators are organized by categories that fit the top five priorities (social and financial status, working conditions, assessment of management measures, and generational renewal). Potential indicators with data sources that can be used or easily gathered are discussed in EWG 24-05.</p> <p>Concerning the possible inclusion of new variables, RCG ECON concluded that the practical aspects of data collection, availability and timeline should be discussed.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCG ECON recommends establishing an ISSG on social aspects.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCG ECON chairs
Time frame (Deadline)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2024, so that the results of this ISSG can be used in the drafting of pilot studies in the National programmes
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed
Comments DM 2024	The new established ISSG on Exploring options for data collection for new social variables held a first meeting online on the 18-19 Sep. 2024.

Recommendation 04. Feedback from the work towards combining FDI and AER data calls.	
ECON_2024_R04	RCG ECON recommends that MS continue discussions at the national level to resolve the inconsistencies they face with FDI and AER data.
TOR 6	Feedback from the work towards combining FDI and AER data calls.
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In December 2023, a virtual workshop was held on harmonizing the AER and FDI data set. MS presented some of the inconsistencies they detected in their AER and FDI data and suggested solutions on how to fix them. Moreover, the Member States worked on their issues offline to make some comparisons. Then, the MS presented their findings on why these inconsistencies happened and how they would tackle them. The AER and FDI data differences were found in the number of fleet segments, vessels, effort, and landing weight and value. The methods used between national institutes need to be harmonised. <p>Moreover, during the workshop, other sources of inconsistencies were mentioned, like Clustering issues, Inactive vessels missing from FDI, and Poor data for gears, which are considered less important at the national level and are not considered in the FDI due to significant difficulties and obstacles in collecting robust data for these small fishing segments. Some secondary fishing gears, used only occasionally, were not reported in the FDI data call; the Geo indicator was reported differently in both data calls; The Definition of Fishing technique and source of data used to prepare the AER and FDI are taken at different points.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MSs have to work at the national level to see the inconsistencies and provide solutions. This procedure takes time to solve the discrepancies, and the harmonization needs time. Next year an evaluation of the outstanding discrepancies between the FDI and AER data will be useful to be carried out in the frame of the FDI methodological EWG.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MS at the national level
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2025
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

Recommendation 05. Low active and Active Segments: The French case	
ECON_2024_R05	RCG ECON recommends that during the ISSG on methodological issues a special session is organised to exchange experiences from MSs on the distinction between active and less active vessels in order to evaluate current guidelines and reporting requirements in the National plan annexes.
TOR 8	Low active and Active Segments: The French case
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The French case showed a clear example of the pros and cons of distinguishing between low active and active vessels en provided a potential methodology based on days at sea to make the distinction. Various MS have gained experience in the last years in distinguishing between these two groups and exchange of these experiences will be very useful to proceed on methodological development and consistency among MSs
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCG ECON to organise a ISSG on methodological issues including a session on the distinction between active and less active vessels
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCG ECON chairs
Time frame (Deadline)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before the 2025 TM
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

Recommendation 06. Methodology testing for re-evaluation of physical capital in France	
ECON_2024_R06	RCG ECON reiterates the previous recommendation that MS update the information on purchase prices of vessels for the estimation of the capital costs every 4-5 years and calls upon MSs to make an effort to collect data on vessel prices in the coming year.
TOR 9	Methodology testing for re-evaluation of physical capital in France
Justification	France presented the outcomes of a study on the valuation of the tangible assets in fisheries. From this presentation it was clear that vessels prices have increased more in the last decade than the inflation rate. This justifies the advice of RCG ECON that MS should update the information on vessel prices once every 4-5 years in order to have up to date and consistent information on capital value and capital costs.
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS to make an effort to collect information about the prices of vessels in order to update the value of capital in 2025 • RCG ECON to include the topic of the valuation of capital in the ISSG on methodological issues after the technical meeting in 2025
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS and RCG ECON chairs
Time frame (Deadline)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

Recommendation 07. Updating the RCG ECON Guidelines	
ECON_2024_R07	RCG ECON recommends that the update of the guidelines for economic and social data collection will become a standard TOR for the Technical meeting in order for the guidelines to be updated regularly
TOR X	Not in the original TOR
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The guidelines have not been updated on the last changes in the definitions decided during the last Technical meeting. This is partly due to the fact that the procedure for updating these guidelines is not clear yet. The group discussed that including the update of these guidelines in TOR of the Technical Meeting, the changes will be included in the report and it will be clear what decisions have been made and who needs to implement these.
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including the update of the guidelines for economic and social data collection will become a standard TOR for the Technical meeting
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCG ECON chairs, needs to send the changes to JRC after publication of the report.
Time frame (Deadline)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TM 2025
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

RCG ECON – Next season (2024-2025)**Chairing**

→ Irene Tzouramani (GRC) main chair; together with Jeppe Strandgaard Herring (DNK) co-chair.

Technical meeting – dates and venue

- Dates: 12-15 May 2025
- Venue: Copenhagen, Denmark

Intersessional work

→ Two ISSGs for 2024-2025:

- ISSG social variables (18-19 Sept 2024) Chairs: Angelos Lontakis (GRC) & Maraja Riechers (DEU)
 - Pilot studies for collecting new variables versus analyses of existing information, the role of RCG ECON.
- ISSG methodological issues: energy use, valuation assets, and methods to distinguish activity levels. (April 2025)

2. RCG LDF – Decisions and recommendations

The decisions and recommendations from RCG Long Distance Fisheries 2024 technical meeting are presented below. Further details can be found on the 2024 RCG LDF technical meeting report.

https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024_RCG-LDF_Report_final.pdf

RCG LDF – Participating countries

Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Spain, The Netherlands, Estonia.

RCG LDF – Decisions and recommendations

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2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG LDF – Decisions and recommendations

Decision 01. Agreement on multilateral agreement for biological sampling in NFPC waters

LDF_2024_D01	To establish and agree on a multilateral agreement for biological sampling of EU small pelagics fisheries in NPFC waters.
Follow-up actions needed	Approval by all relevant NCs
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	NCs of DEU, LTU, NLD, POL.
Time frame (Deadline)	Decision Meeting 2024
Comments	For more details see section 7.1 on 2024 RCG LDF technical meeting report
Result DM 2024	Agreed
Comments DM 2024	The agreement has already been signed and it is available on https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/agreements/

Decision 02. Agreement on the Regional Work Plan for Long Distance Fisheries

LDF_2024_D02	To establish and agree on a Regional Work Plan for Long Distance Fisheries
Follow-up actions needed	Approval by all relevant NCs
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	NCs of DEU, LTU, LVA, NLD, POL
Time frame (Deadline)	Decision Meeting 2024
Comments	For more details see section 7.3 on 2024 RCG LDF technical meeting report
Result DM 2024	Agreed
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

Decision 03. Agreement on multilateral agreement for biological sampling in CECAF waters

LDF_2024_D03	To agree on a multilateral agreement for a biological sampling of EU small pelagics fisheries in CECAF waters
Follow-up actions needed	Approval by all relevant NCs
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	NCs of DEU, LTU, LVA, NLD, POL
Time frame (Deadline)	Decision Meeting 2024
Comments	For more details see section 8.1 on 2024 RCG LDF technical meeting report
Result DM 2024	Agreed
Comments DM 2024	The agreement has already been signed and it is available on https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/agreements/

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG LDF – Decisions and recommendations

Decision 04. Agreement on multilateral agreement for biological sampling in SPRFMO waters	
LDF_2024_D04	To agree on a multilateral agreement for a biological sampling of EU small pelagics fisheries in SPRFMO waters
Follow-up actions needed	Approval by all relevant NCs
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	NCs of DEU, LTU, NLD, POL
Time frame (Deadline)	Decision Meeting 2024
Comments	For more details see section 8.2 on 2024 RCG LDF technical meeting report
Result DM 2024	Agreed
Comments DM 2024	The agreement has already been signed and it is available on https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/agreements/

Recommendation 01. Assignment of RCG LDF as designated body for data requirements and collection in outermost regions	
LDF_2024_R01	RCG LDF to take the role as designated body to monitor data collection requirements and, if needed to coordinate biological data collection in the outermost regions
Follow-up actions needed	Approval by all RCG LDF NCs and updating the RoP of RCG LDF where and when appropriate. A workshop could be organised with the French representatives to discuss the requirements before the next TM.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG LDF NCs to approve and to request the EU Commission to assign the RCG LDF as the designated body for data requirements and collection in the outermost regions in future updates of the EU-MAP
Time frame (Deadline)	Decision meeting 2024
Comments	For more details see section 3.7 on 2024 RCG LDF technical meeting report
Comments DM 2024	A workshop was included in the follow-up actions following the comments by the Anaïs Roussel (French NC). FRA is not part of the RCG LDF however FRA has outermost regions and therefore would like to be informed.

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG LDF – Decisions and recommendations

Recommendation 02. Establishing an ISSG on NAFO harmonization protocols for on-board sampling (ISSG NAFO-SP)	
LDF_2024_R02	The RCG LDF recommends the creation of a new ISSG with the main objective of harmonising and standardising, as far as possible, protocols for on-board sampling of commercial fisheries in the NAFO Regulatory Area among EU Member States
Follow-up actions needed	Approval by all RCG LDF NCs
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG LDF NCs to approve the establishment of the ISSG NAFO-SP
Time frame (Deadline)	Decision meeting 2024
Comments	For more details see section 4.3 on 2024 RCG LDF technical meeting report
Result DM 2024	Agreed
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

Recommendation 03. Establishing an ISSG on CECAF Observer Programme of small pelagics (ISSG CECAF-OP)	
LDF_2024_R03	The RCG LDF recommends the creation of a new ISSG with the primary objective of jointly organising the necessary scientific observer coverage in the CECAF Regulatory Area in cooperation with the Mauritanian Institute for Fisheries Research (IMROP)
Follow-up actions needed	Approval by all RCG LDF NCs
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG LDF NCs to approve the establishment of the ISSG CECAF-OP
Time frame (Deadline)	Decision meeting 2024
Comments	For more details see section 6.1.3 on 2024 RCG LDF technical meeting report
Result DM 2024	Agreed
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG LDF – Decisions and recommendations

Recommendation 04. Assignment of RCG LDF as coordinating body for data collection in NPFC waters	
LDF_2024_R04	RCG LDF to take the role as coordinating body for biological data collection in the NPFC region.
Follow-up actions needed	Approval by all RCG LDF NCs and updating the RoP of RCG LDF where and when appropriate.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG LDF NCs to approve and to request EU Commission to reflect NPFC requirements in future updates to the EU-MAP.
Time frame (Deadline)	Decision meeting 2024
Comments	For more details see section 7.1 on 2024 RCG LDF technical meeting report
Result DM 2024	Agreed
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

Recommendation 05. Establishing an ISSG on SMEFF fisheries in the high seas, in particular FAO area 41	
LDF_2024_R05	The RCG LDF recommends the creation of a new ISSG with the primary objective of reviewing and addressing the recommendations from the final report of the "SMEFF study".
Follow-up actions needed	Approval by all RCG LDF NCs
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG LDF NCs to approve the establishment of the ISSG SMEFF-FAO41
Time frame (Deadline)	Decision meeting 2024
Comments	For more details see section 7.2 on 2024 RCG LDF technical meeting report
Result DM 2024	Agreed
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

RCG LDF – Next season (2024 – 2025)**Chairing**

→ Maksims Kovsars (LVA)

Technical meeting – dates and venue

→ Dates: Early July 2025 (the week 1-4 of July or alternatively 8-11 July)

→ Venue: Estonia kindly offered to host this meeting in Tallin.

Intersessional work

→ Four ISSGs for 2024-2025:

- ISSG on SPRFMO Observer Programme (ISSG SPRFMO-OP)
- ISSG on NAFO harmonization protocols for on-board sampling (ISSG NAFO-SP)
- ISSG on SMEFF fisheries in the high seas, in particular FAO area 41 (ISSG SMEFF)
- ISSG on CECAF Observer Programme of small pelagics (ISSG CECAF-OP)

3. RCG LP – Decisions and recommendations

The decisions and recommendations derived from the RCG Large Pelagics Technical Meeting 2024, which was held in Olhao (Portugal) from the 24th to the 26th of June, are presented hereunder.

Further details can be found on the 2024 RCG LP technical meeting report.

https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024_RCG-LP_Report_final.pdf

RCG LP – Participating countries

Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain

RCG LP – Decisions and recommendations

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2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG LP – Decisions and recommendations

Decision 01. Approve the LP RWP submitted in Oct. 2023 and endorsed by MS in their NWP	
LP_2024_D01	Approve the LP RWP which was submitted in Oct. 2023 and have it endorsed by MS in their NWP in Oct. 2024
TOR 4	Sampling and regional work plans
Justification	The approval of the LP RWP ensures alignment with Member States' National Work Plans (NWP). The RWPs are designed to be a guiding framework, but their adoption within NWPs solidifies their use at the national level. As discussed, this alignment is key for maintaining consistency and fulfilling obligations
Follow-up actions needed	Approve the LP Regional Work Plan which is endorsed by the RCG LP's Member states in their National Work Plans.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	NCs /Member States
Time frame (Deadline)	Decision Meeting 2024
Comments	
Result DM 2024	Agreed
Comments DM 2024	Table 2.I included as an annex of the RWP LP 2025-2027 for reference purposes

Decision 02. Agree the perimeter of the test study on integration of large pelagic data into the RDBES format	
LP_2024_D02	Agree that the perimeter of the test study on integration of large pelagic data into the RDBES format to produce at least ICCAT data submission forms, is the one defined in this report.
TOR 3	Regional database
Justification	This decision focuses on ensuring data consistency and compatibility with ICCAT data submission forms. The integration into the Regional Database and Estimation System (RDBES) is key to improving data quality and meeting international obligations. The RDBES project has been a central focus for regional coordination, especially as the RDBES system is set to replace InterCatch for stock assessments
Follow-up actions needed	Agree the perimeter of the test study outline in the 2024 T.M. report
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	NCs /Member States
Time frame (Deadline)	Decision Meeting 2024
Comments	
Result DM 2024	Agreed
Comments DM 2024	The decision applies to the MS that have agreed to be part of the test study, namely: FRA, IRL, PRT, and CYP.

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG LP – Decisions and recommendations

Decision 03. Agree to allocate at minimum one week of NE time to the RDBES format test study	
LP_2024_D03	Agree, at least for the countries which committed to participate, to allocate at minimum one week of NE time to the RDBES format test study
TOR 3	Regional database
Justification	Allocating adequate time for this test study is essential to ensure that countries can contribute meaningfully to the RDBES pilot phase. This decision emphasizes the commitment of Member States to support regional data integration efforts. Previous discussions highlighted the importance of transparent data collection and management as part of the RDBES roadmap.
Follow-up actions needed	Agree for countries participating in the test study to allocate one week of National expert time and nominate this expert.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	NCs /Member States
Time frame (Deadline)	Decision Meeting 2024
Comments	
Result DM 2024	Agreed
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

Recommendation 01. RCG LP recommends to ISSG RWP the inclusion of all RCGs chairs and at least two experts from each RCG	
LP_2024_R01	The RCG LP recommends to the pan regional ISSG RWP the inclusion of the RCG LP chairs and at least two national experts, in order to encompass the development of LP RWP for 2028-2030
TOR I	RCG LP structure, organisation and links
Justification	The inclusion of more experts ensures diverse input and alignment across regions, improving the robustness of the RWP for 2028-2030.
Follow-up actions needed	Nominate and agree chair and two NE from each RCG LP to participate and follow ISSG RWP developments.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	ISSG RWP to chairs of the concerned RCGs
Time frame (Deadline)	
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	Agreed. RCG LP members are welcome to join the pan regional ISSG RWP. Get in contact with the ISSG chairs/ RCGs Secretariat to ensure future coordination.

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG LP – Decisions and recommendations

Recommendation 02. RCG LP request a clear guidance from the ISSG RWP on how to integrate the RWP into the NWP in Oct. 2024	
LP_2024_R02	The RCG LP request a clear guidance from the ISSG RWP as how to integrate the RWP into the NWP in October 2024.
TOR 4	Sampling and regional work plans
Justification	Clear instructions are needed to align Member States' NWPs with the RWP, avoiding inconsistencies and ensuring compliance with ICCAT and DCF requirements
Follow-up actions needed	RCG LP members to join the work of the ISSG RWP
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	ISSG RWP to instruct MS
Time frame (Deadline)	
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	Preliminary guidance document was already available as a result of the 2024 discussions held at the TM NANSEA & Baltic. Further work is envisaged for next season in preparation of the RWP 2028-2030. In addition, guidelines on how to integrate the RWP into NWP are published on the DCF website.

Recommendation 03. RCG LP recommends using only the global structure of Table 2.1 in the LP RWP without associated values	
LP_2024_R03	RCG LP recommends using only the global structure of Table 2.1 in the LP RWP without any associated values
TOR 4	Sampling and regional work plans
Justification	By focusing on the structure of Table 2.1 without associated values, the RCG ensures consistency in the data collection process, especially for international data calls
Follow-up actions needed	Agreement from ISSG RWP
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	ISSG RWP /RCG LP
Time frame (Deadline)	
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	The respective values for Table 2.1, which has been included as an Annex, shall be provided at national level.

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG LP – Decisions and recommendations

Recommendation 04. Develop common data quality indicators and data cleaning tools	
LP_2024_R04	Develop common data quality indicators and data cleaning tools
TOR 2	Available data, data transmissions and gaps
Justification	There are many working documents presented by the EU in the tuna RFMOs, where data from the observer programs from ESP and FRA are pooled. In this process, it is essential to maintain a minimum quality of the data, which must be achieved through common data validation protocols and quality indicators. Standardised data validation is essential, particularly as MS pool their observer data for submission to RFMOs. Quality indicators like those proposed in the "Qualitrain" initiative are vital.
Follow-up actions needed	Follow up with Qualitrain
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG LP chair
Time frame (Deadline)	
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	Qualitrain project is already facing their final phase, ending in early 2025, thus this recommendation is expected to be reviewed next year.

Recommendation 05. Develop a common bycatch data raising procedure	
LP_2024_R05	Develop a common bycatch data raising procedure
TOR 2	Available data, data transmissions and gaps
Justification	Historical attempts to develop a unified bycatch data methodology have been hindered by resource and time constraints within the respective institutes. However, with the recent increase in observer coverage from private monitoring programs, the urgency to address this gap has diminished. Despite this, it remains a crucial goal for the group, as standardizing the bycatch data collection process is essential. Now, with improved observation coverage, the group recommends prioritizing the development of a common methodology to ensure consistency and reliability across all programs.
Follow-up actions needed	
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	
Time frame (Deadline)	
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	There is the need to implement a common methodology on how to do the sampling to be able to develop a rising procedure.

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG LP – Decisions and recommendations

Recommendation 06. Develop a CKMR coordinated sampling programme	
LP_2024_R06	Develop a CKMR coordinated sampling programme, pending ICCAT's Commission decision in November 2024
TOR 4	Sampling and regional work plans
Justification	Pending ICCAT's decision, developing a coordinated Close-Kin Mark–Recapture (CKMR) program for Bluefin Tuna is crucial for improving stock assessments.
Follow-up actions needed	Amend BFT sampling to meet new requirement to be included in the NWP and RWP
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	
Time frame (Deadline)	November 2024, ICCAT's Commission
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	Subject to ICCAT's decision in Nov 2024. MS can go ahead and incorporate it in their NWP stating that it is subject to ICCAT's decision so when it comes to report in the annual report MS can refer to ICCAT's decision.

Recommendation 07. Enhance the ICCAT-EU/DCF cooperation and coordination	
LP_2024_R07	To further enhance the ICCAT-EU/DCF cooperation and coordination
TOR 2	Available data, data transmissions and gaps
Justification	The DFC sampling activities should be updated to be aligned with ICCAT needs, aiming an effective and efficient planning, collection and provision of access to samples to ICCAT (as one of the end-users of the program). Strengthening coordination between ICCAT and EU/DCF is essential for efficient sampling and the provision of biological samples, ensuring alignment with ICCAT data needs
Follow-up actions needed	
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	
Time frame (Deadline)	
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

Recommendation 08. Develop metadata database to store and keep updated information on biological samples collected in the past within DCF for ICCAT species	
LP_2024_R08	Develop metadata database to store and keep updated information on biological samples collected in the past within DCF for ICCAT species
TOR 2	Available data, data transmissions and gaps
Justification	<p>The development of a metadata database is crucial to enhance the traceability and accessibility of biological samples that have been collected over time within the Data Collection Framework (DCF) for ICCAT species. This recommendation stems from the need to ensure that biological samples, often spread across various Member States (MS), are adequately documented and easily accessible to end-users such as researchers, ICCAT, and other relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>A centralized metadata database would address the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traceability: Where biological samples are stored, which institutions are responsible for them, and whether they have been processed or analyzed. • Access: It facilitates access for ICCAT or other end-users to samples that are needed for scientific assessments, including stock assessments and studies on ecosystem impacts. • Transparency and Organization: This database would provide an organized repository for historical data, ensuring that samples are not overlooked and can be efficiently utilized in future research
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Responsible Persons: Determine the individuals or institutions responsible for managing the biological samples at the Member States (MS) level. • Catalog Sample Locations: Establish where the samples are physically stored across MS and ensure this information is recorded in the metadata database.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	
Time frame (Deadline)	
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

Recommendation 09. Consider a data call for ICCAT	
LP_2024_R09	Consider a data call for ICCAT to have effective access to biological samples collected within EU-DCF.
TOR 2	Available data, data transmissions and gaps
Justification	<p>The recommendation to consider a data call for ICCAT is aimed at ensuring that ICCAT has effective and streamlined access to biological samples collected under the EU Data Collection Framework (DCF). By formalising a data call, the process of sharing biological samples, which are crucial for stock assessments and other scientific evaluations, can be standardized and made more efficient.</p> <p>The biological samples collected under DCF programs, especially for species of interest to ICCAT, are often spread across various Member States. A formal data call would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Access: Provide ICCAT with timely access to the samples it needs for various research and conservation projects. • Standardization: Ensure that all Member States are aligned in terms of how samples are shared, reducing inconsistencies in data provision. • Coordination: Strengthen coordination between the EU-DCF and ICCAT, allowing for more effective planning and utilization of biological data in ICCAT stock assessments
Follow-up actions needed	The data call should be designed to align with ICCAT’s specific requirements for biological data, ensuring that the data collected under DCF is fully utilized in regional fisheries management. The recommendation is for RCG LP, in coordination with ICCAT and Member States, should prepare a formal data call specifying the types of samples needed and the timeline for data submission.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG LP chair, ICCAT coordination and MS experts/correspondents.
Time frame (Deadline)	
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

Recommendation 10. Include DCF level 7 as optional information the School type/FADs in the RCG LP métiers reference list	
LP_2024_R10	Include DCF level 7 as optional information the School type/FADs in the RCG LP métiers reference list
TOR 2	Available data, data transmissions and gaps
Justification	<p>This recommendation is focused on improving the granularity of data related to fishing operations by including optional information on School type and Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) at DCF level 7 in the RCG LP métiers reference list. The motivation behind this recommendation is to provide a more detailed classification of fishing activities, specifically around the use of FADs, which play a significant role in tropical tuna fisheries.</p> <p>By allowing the inclusion of this information, the RCG LP aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Data Quality: More detailed data on school type (whether free schools or associated with FADs) can enhance the quality of catch and effort data, which is critical for stock assessments. • Align with ICCAT Requirements: ICCAT has increasingly focused on FAD-related activities, and including this level of detail helps align EU-DCF reporting with ICCAT’s data needs for FAD management. • Support Ecosystem-Based Management: Understanding the impact of different fishing methods, such as FAD vs. free school fishing, is important for ecosystem-based fisheries management
Follow-up actions needed	Amend the Métiers Reference List: Update the RCG LP métiers reference list to include the optional DCF level 7 information for School type/FADs, ensuring that this classification can be used in future data reporting.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	ISSG Métiers and transversal issues chairs
Time frame (Deadline)	Intersessional period 2024-2025
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

Recommendation 11. NCs to nominate national experts to participate in RCG LP ISSGs

LP_2024_R011	NCs to nominate national experts to participate in RCG LP ISSGs. Ask NCs to communicate with their NEs to check on their availability to participate in RCGs/ ISSGs in general and to propose new members.
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2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG LP – Decisions and recommendations

Recommendation 11. NCs to nominate national experts to participate in RCG LP ISSGs	
TOR I	RCG LP structure, organisation and links
Justification	<p>This recommendation is aimed at enhancing the efficiency and expertise within the Intersessional Sub-Groups (ISSGs) by ensuring that each National Correspondent (NC) nominates relevant national experts (NEs) to participate in RCG LP ISSGs. The ISSGs are critical for addressing specific issues within the RCG LP framework, such as data management, sampling methodologies, and stock assessments. Having a well-rounded group of experts from various Member States will ensure that the ISSGs have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the technical challenges of large pelagic fisheries management.</p> <p>Key reasons for this recommendation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening Expertise: By involving national experts from each Member State, the ISSGs can benefit from diverse technical knowledge and expertise, improving the quality of the outputs. • Consistency in Participation: Ensuring that NCs regularly check the availability of their national experts and update the list of participants will lead to better continuity and consistency in ISSG work. • Enhanced Collaboration: This initiative will foster stronger collaboration across Member States, allowing for more coordinated and effective regional management of large pelagic species
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominate National Experts: NCs should identify and nominate national experts with relevant expertise to participate in the ISSGs and communicate this information to the RCG LP Secretariat. • Update ISSG Participant Lists: The list of ISSGs and their national experts should be reviewed and updated regularly, ensuring it reflects the latest changes in participation from each Member State. • Coordination with RCG Chairs and Secretariat: NCs should liaise with the RCG chairs and the RCG Secretariat to ensure that the list of participants is maintained accurately and that new members are properly onboarded
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	NCs/RCG chairs/RCGs Secretariat
Time frame (Deadline)	2024 Liaison meeting
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

RCG LP – Next season (2024 – 2025)

Chairing

Following the chair's rotation system agreed in 2022, in 2025 the chairmanship is taken by PRT and CYP.

RCG LP CHAIRING SCHEDULE			
	YEAR	CHAIR	CO-CHAIR
1st rotation	2023	Ireland*	Malta
	2024	Malta	Portugal
	2025	Portugal	Cyprus
	2026	Cyprus	Greece
	2027	Greece	Italy
	2028	Italy	France
	2029	France	Spain
	2030	Spain	Croatia
	2031	Croatia	Ireland

→ Next chair: Pedro Lino/Dalia Reis (PRT) as main chair and Ioannis Thasitis (CYP) as co-chair

Technical meeting – dates and venue

- Dates: 2-4 June 2025
- Venue: Cyprus (venue to be confirmed)

Intersessional work

- Six ISSGs for 2024-2025:
 - ISSG on Tropical Tuna (Tropical Tuna Treatment; Tropical Tuna Observers)
 - ISSG on Bluefin Tuna
 - ISSG on Mediterranean Sea Large Pelagics (pan regional ISSG)
 - ISSG on Large Pelagics Regional Database Development
 - ISSG on Baitboat, Pole and Line
 - ISSG on Longline Fisheries outside the Mediterranean Sea

4. RCG Med&BS – Decisions and recommendations

The recommendations from 2024 RCG Mediterranean and Black Sea technical meeting are presented in following pages.

The 2024 RCG Med&BS annual technical meeting took place in Montpellier, 26 -30 Aug, the final report is under development. Once it is ready it will be available on <https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/rcg-medbs/> under the section Latest Reports.

RCG Med&BS – Participating countries

Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Romania, Slovenia, Spain.

RCG Med&BS – Decisions and recommendations

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2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG Med&BS – Decisions and recommendations

Recommendation 01. Use of quality checks for commercial and survey data by Member States	
Med&BS_2024_R01	Use of the available data quality check tools by Member States for submission to the DG MARE Data Calls and other reporting obligations
TOR I	End-users input – Data requirements and data transmission issues
Justification	<p>This recommendation complements RCG MED & BS 2023 Recommendation 6.</p> <p>In recent years, several tools have been developed in order to check the quality of the data collected before being submitted to any data call, such as RoME for MEDITS survey or the RDBQC R package for the information obtained in the monitoring of the commercial fleet. In addition to this, the Qualitrain project carried out: (i) two trainings on quality checks, to strengthen capacity and improve the quality of Med and BS data, (ii) data checks of 146 Med & BS stocks through Tasks 2 & 3, the outcomes of which will be sent to the Member States for eventual action.</p> <p>All MS should be well aware, by now, of these tools, which will help to provide consistent information to all end-users through the different data calls, as also highlighted by STECF EWG 24-02. This is also in line with the legal obligations of Member States, based on Article 14 of the DCF Regulation.</p> <p>To this end, it is recommended that MS visit the github folder where the quality check packages are stored (https://github.com/COISPA/RDBqc, https://github.com/COISPA/RoME) and follow-up the process of the Qualitrain project regarding quality checks. Additionally, the RDBFIS has integrated the abovementioned quality checks, that are readily available to Member States for use.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MS to use the available quality check tools to ensure the consistency of information provided to end-users, as part of their standard checking procedures MS to address the data issues identified by Qualitrain task 2 & 3, in the proposed order of priority
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MSs, QualiTrain and RDBFIS II consortia, RCG Med & BS chairs
Time frame (Deadline)	Before submitting information to any Data Call in 2025 for point 1 and point 2 priority I issues
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG Med&BS – Decisions and recommendations

Recommendation 02. Qualitrain work follow up through the RCG Med&BS	
Med&BS_2024_R02	Setting up of ISSG on data quality to follow up the outcomes of Qualitrain project
TOR 4	Cooperation with regional projects
Justification	<p>QualiTrain (Quality checking of Mediterranean and Black Sea data and Training for Member State experts) is a specific contract within the FRAMEWORK CONTRACT – EASME/EMFF/2020/OP/021 (EMFF/2020/3.2.4 Lots 1-2-3), a “Framework Contract for the provision of scientific advice for the Mediterranean and the Black Seas” specifically dedicated to implement technical work on quality checks, as well as prepare, coordinate and organise technical trainings and information sessions. The project has a duration of 24 months from 14.12.2022 to 13.12.2024.</p> <p>During the 2023 RCG Med & BS Annual meeting, the idea to have an ISSG group on quality checks using the tools developed and consolidated in QualiTrain project before the data call submission, was recommended (Recommendation 6).</p> <p>To continue the work on data quality checks, there should be a follow up action through the RCG Med & BS, by setting up a dedicated ISSG.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS to appoint one or two experts to be part of the ISSG group on quality checks • RCG Med & BS to decide on the chairing of this ISSG [Kostas Touloumis (FRI) was appointed after the meeting] • The appointed chair of the ISSG on quality checks to propose a work programme for the 2024 – 2025 intersession, in collaboration with QualiTrain consortium
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MSs, QualiTrain and RDBFIS II consortia, RCG Med & BS chairs
Time frame (Deadline)	Before the 2024 Decision Meeting for the first two points and until 13.12.2024 for the third point
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG Med&BS – Decisions and recommendations

Recommendation 03. RDBFIS use for submission of data	
Med&BS_2024_R03	Use of RDBFIS for the submission of data to the 2025 Med & BS data call and optionally to the 2025 FDI data call
TOR 4	Cooperation with regional projects
Justification	<p>RDBFIS (Hosting, maintenance and further development of the Regional Database for the Mediterranean and Black Seas) is a specific contract within the FRAMEWORK CONTRACT – EASME/EMFF/2020/OP/021 (EMFF/2020/3.2.4 Lots 1-2-3), a “Framework Contract for the provision of scientific advice for the Mediterranean and the Black Seas” that has developed a centralized database system serving the RCG Med & BS and relevant Member States. The project has a duration of 24 months from 1.4.2023 to 31.3.2025.</p> <p>Through a number of data calls, RDBFIS is currently being populated with data up to 2022 by the relevant Member States. An online training is planned from the 17th to the 19th of September 2024, to familiarise national experts with RDBFIS. A second training will be organised before the completion of the project. By the end of the project, the Med & BS Member States are expected to have quality checked and uploaded the relevant data up to 2022 to RDBFIS.</p> <p>In order to ensure that the datasets in both the RDBFIS and JRC databases are consistent, Member States are encouraged to perform quality checks to the 2023 data sets and upload them to RDBFIS.</p> <p>To explore the possibility of allowing the submission of Med & BS data to JRC <i>through</i> RDBFIS only, a test run is proposed, where a subset of data from RDBFIS is submitted to JRC, before the 2025 data calls. COM will facilitate this process.</p> <p>If the test run is successful, the Med & BS Member States should use RDBFIS for the submission of data to the 2025 Med & BS data call and, optionally, to the 2025 FDI data call. This ties in with RCG MED & BS 2023 Recommendation 9, that aims to identify ways to facilitate the managing of the increasing number of data calls through different ways.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States to participate to the relevant bilateral meetings and trainings of RDBFIS • Perform test run to check submission of data from RDBFIS to JRC • If test run is successful, Member States to upload 2023 data sets to RDBFIS and to use RDBFIS to submit data to the 2025 Med & BS data call and, optionally, to the 2025 FDI data call
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RDBFIS Consortium, RDB Steering Committee, RCG Med&BS, MS experts, COM, JRC
Time frame (Deadline)	Before next data calls and RCG Med&BS technical meeting
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG Med&BS – Decisions and recommendations

Recommendation 04. RDBFIS future hosting	
Med&BS_2024_R04	Work intersessionally towards defining requirements for the future host of the regional database Med & BS
TOR 3	Regional database
Justification	<p>Regional databases (RDBs) are referenced under the 2017 Data Collection Framework (DCF) Regulation. Together with the corresponding Regional Coordination Group (RCG), the Commission, Member States and end users are entrusted to cooperate on the creation of RDBs. RDBs have existed for a period of time for the Baltic Sea, the North Sea & Eastern Arctic and the North-East Atlantic, hosted by ICES. This is not yet the case in the Med & BS, where DCF data of different aggregation levels are still placed in different databases, spread mainly between the JRC and the GFCM.</p> <p>In recent years, RDBFIS has developed a centralized database system aimed to serve the RCG Med & BS and relevant Member States. The hosting of this system is not yet agreed. In order to progress towards a solution, intersessional work is proposed, to better define the requirements needed for a future host. The relevant actors (COM, RCG Med & BS and involved ISSGs within the RCG, NCs) should agree on a workplan during the 2024-2025 intersession.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on and implement a roadmap towards defining the requirements for the future host of the regional database of Med & BS • By recalling the decisions already taken by the RCG and the feasibility studies already carried out, the RDBFIS Consortium has to define the technical and financial requirements, as well as the necessary skills, to maintain the RDB, considering ICES experience with RDBES, • Then, on this basis, the RDB Steering committee has to further develop the roadmap and identify potential hosts for the RDB.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RDBFIS Consortium, RDB Steering Committee, RCG Med&BS, NCs, COM
Time frame (Deadline)	Before next RCG Med&BS Technical meeting
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	No further comments

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG Med&BS – Decisions and recommendations

Recommendation 05. Public availability of survey data	
Med&BS_2024_R05	Make DCF survey data publicly available, excluding the last 3 years of data
TOR 7	Scientific surveys
Justification	<p>Commission Implementing Decision (EU 2021/1168) establishes a list of mandatory research surveys. For the Med & BS Member States, these include MEDIAS, BTSBS, PTSBS, MEDITS and SOLEMON.</p> <p>In 2021, at its Plenary meeting 21-02, STECF concluded that, because fisheries data (both commercial and survey data) in the Med & BS area are currently less accessible than the corresponding ones in the ICES area, this adds a significant workload to all interested parties, and makes data sharing for the Med&BS data a longer and more cumbersome process which negatively affects all interested parties (data requesters, MS, DG MARE, JRC). In recent years, COM, together with JRC, have been receiving and handling an increasing number of data requests from various users, in order to promote the multiuse of DCF data.</p> <p>At the STECF PLEN 21-02 meeting, STECF stressed that the data collected under DCF calls are funded through public money; survey data, in particular, represent highly valuable information of generic scientific interest and without restrictions linked to commercial confidentiality. STECF fully supports that these scientific resources be made publicly available in the interests of all end-users and be freely used for further analyses provided the source is acknowledged and the obligations are met.</p> <p>In line with STECF conclusions from the STECF PLEN 21-02 meeting, during the 2024 MEDITS and MEDIAS Coordination Group meetings, the COM proposed to make surveys data (MEDIAS, BTSBS, PTSBS, MEDITS and SOLEMON) publicly available, allowing for a 3-year restriction, as per the DCF Regulation (Article 17 paragraph 7). The MEDITS and MEDIAS Coordination Group meetings agreed to this proposal. The two groups also agreed to prepare a document addressed to end users, describing the changes in survey design and implementation through time, to be finalised by end of 2024/ beginning 2025 (MEDITS) and by the next MEDIAS meeting (April 2025).</p> <p>During the RCG Med & BS 2024 meeting, the proposal to set up a way to track data sets was considered, that will help following up the use of data. Data would be publicly available on the condition that tracking data tools will be ensured.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a document addressed to end users by end January 2025 for MEDITS and by end April 2025 for MEDIAS • Propose tools for tracking of data sets • Under the condition that tracking of data is enabled, make survey data (MEDIAS, BTSBS, PTSBS, MEDITS and SOLEMON) publicly available, excluding the last 3 years of data
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Scientific survey Coordination Groups (e.g. MEDITS and MEDIAS), COM, JRC, RDBFIS consortium, RCG Med & BS, NCs

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG Med&BS – Decisions and recommendations

Recommendation 05. Public availability of survey data	
Time frame (Deadline)	Before the RCG Decision Meeting (25 th September) each MS must define for which years (prior to survey funding by COM), all survey data will be made publicly available.
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	GRC agreed to make the data publicly available from 1995, in the document should be stated that the data for some years is poor; HRV agreed to provide data from 2002; ITA agreed to provide data from 1994; FRA agreed; MTL agreed data available from 2002; ESP agreed; CYP it is not applicable because CYP was not conducting any sampling prior to DCF; SVN agreed.

Recommendation 06. On the establishment of access rules to DCRF data for GFCM	
Med&BS_2024_R06	RCG Med&BS urges GFCM to establish rules on the use of data from the DCRF online platform by experts participating in GFCM technical meetings, for safeguarding that the relevant data will be used only for the purposes of the relevant meetings.
TOR I	End-users input – Data requirements and data transmission issues
Justification	RCG Med&BS is concerned on the fact that there have been identified cases where experts participating in GFCM technical meetings had free access to data uploaded on the DCRF online platform, and have used data for purposes other than the scope of the relevant meetings.
Follow-up actions needed	GFCM should explore technical possibilities to limit the use of data stored in the relevant stock assessment working group shared folders (on the GFCM SharePoint). Current access rights to stock assessment SharedPoint folders should be reviewed and limited only to relevant experts. More strict rules could be established to limit the access to shared datasets. E.g. access rights to the SharePoint assigned only to the GFCM, EC and appointed national experts for each WG as well as stock coordinators.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	DGMARE, GFCM Secretariat
Time frame (Deadline)	Before next RCG Med & BS annual meeting
Comments	
Comments DM 2024	The issue has been raised at the 2024 Liaison Meeting with GFCM and GFCM Secretariat is looking into it.

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG Med&BS – Decisions and recommendations

RCG Med&BS – Next season (2024 – 2025)

Chairing

→ Charis Charilaou (CYP) main chair and Alexandru Gheorghe (ROU) co-chair.

Technical meeting – dates and venue

→ Dates: 25-29 August 2025

→ Venue: Romania, the exact location TBD.

Intersessional groups

→ Ten groups for 2024-2025:

- ISSG Decision-making process for developing RWPs - Chair: Alessandro Ligas
- ISSG Recreational Fisheries – Chairs: Paraskevi Karachle and Manos Koutrakis
- ISSG PETs bycatch monitoring – Currently no chair
- ISSG on stomach contents in the Med&BS – Chairs: Paolo Sartor and Cristina Follesa
- ISSG Scientific network for sampling optimization – Chair: Isabella Bitetto
- ISSG on Data Quality (newly established) – Chair: Kostas Touloumis
- Med&BS RDB Steering Committee – Newly Appointed Chair: Kolyo Zhivkov Zhelev
- ISSG on End Users – Newly Appointed Chair: Ivana Vukov
- MEDITS steering committee – Chair: Beatriz Guijarro
- MEDIAS steering committee – Chair: Tarek Hattab

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

5. RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

The decisions and recommendations from RCG NANSEA & RCG Baltic annual back-to-back technical meeting 2024 are presented in the following pages. More details can be found in RCG NANSEA & RCG Baltic 2024 annual report, available on the RCGs website on both NANSEA and Baltic sites: <https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/rcg-nansea/> <https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/rcg-baltic/>

https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2024-RCG-NANSEA-RCG-Baltic-TM_Part-I_Report_CLEAN.pdf

https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2024_RCG-NANSEA-RCG-Baltic-TM_Part-II-Report_CLEAN_after_DM.pdf

https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2024_RCG-NANSEA-RCG-Baltic-TM_Part-III-Report_CLEAN.pdf

RCG NANSEA – Participating countries

Sweden, Estonia, Belgium, Spain, Germany, Denmark, France, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal.

RCG Baltic – Participating countries

Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden

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RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic - Decisions and recommendations

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
Enduser and RCG	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R01	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R01	ongoing	The RCG NSEA & Baltic recommends that all MS collect genetic samples from spawning (running) cod in the southern North Sea (4b, 4c) and the channel 7d, in spring 2025. The collection could be conducted from IBTS or other relevant scientific survey program as well as from observer programs if possible.	All MS collect genetic samples from spawning (running) cod in the southern North Sea (4b, 4c) and the channel 7d, in spring 2025. The collection could be conducted from IBTS or other relevant scientific survey program as well as from observer programs if possible.	NCs	spring 2025	The aim of this sampling is to make best use of resources (both at sea and in the lab) and therefore only sample and analyse samples that are expected to help improving the stock assessment and advice on the Cod in Subarea 4, divisions 6.a and 7.d, and Subdivision 20 (North Sea, West of Scotland, eastern English Channel, and Skagerrak). The project EMFAF-2023-PIA-FisheriesScientificAdvice GenDC has been funded and signed in May 2024. The project duration is 2 years. The project aim is to improve stock assessments and sustainable management of marine fisheries, specifically cod, through integrated genetic data collection.	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R01					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					

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RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
RCG	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R02	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R02	ongoing	The RCG recommends NC to use the markdown script developed by WGRDBESGOV to quality check their data and give feedback to the WGRDBESGOV in November.	National Institutes to use the R markdown script for data quality checking developed by WGRDBESGOV and to give feedback to the WGRDBESGOV in November.	NCs	November 2024	High-quality data is essential for effective provision of scientific advice, as it ensures that the information used is precise, comprehensive, and trustworthy. Maintaining data quality involves regular data cleansing, validation, and verification processes to remove inaccuracies and standardize data formats. The WGRDBESGOV ISSG on data quality was tasked to develop a plan to integrate a quality procedure in the RDBES process. One of the steps of checking the quality of the data is to run the R markdown script developed by the WGRDBESGOV ISSG.	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R02					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
RCG	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R03	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R03	ongoing	The RCG recommends that ICES WGCATCH, WGBYC review the template developed by the RCG to document the methodology and data sources used to populate the calculated RDBES fields in the commercial landings and effort files and provide feedback.	ICES WGCATCH, WGBYC review the template developed by the RCG to document the methodology and data sources used to populate the calculated RDBES fields in the commercial landings and effort files and provide feedback.	ICES WGCA TCH, ICES WGBYC	November 2024	The ISSG on Metier and transversal variables have prepared a template to document the methodology and data sources used to fill in calculated fields of CL and CE files. This type of document is already requested in other data calls (e.g. FDI National Chapters) and it is considered very relevant for end users (e.g. it can be very useful to know more about how the effort data for gillnets is calculated)	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R03					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					
RCG	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R04	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R04	ongoing	NCs to put resources in the development of the estimates using RDBES data and also to start filling the FDI fields in the RDBES data model.	NCs to put resources of the national Institutes in the development of the estimates using RDBES data and also to start filling the FDI fields in the RDBES data model.	NCs	ASAP	The conversion module from RDBES to FDI is a priority for the Commission, however, the group discussed that the RDBES is not ready for this development yet. In order to answer the FDI requests for biological variables, the estimates (number at length, number at age, discards, etc) have to be calculated, and this is not expected to be ready before 2027.	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R04					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					

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RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
RCG	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R05	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R05	ongoing	Commission to set up a Workshop for NCs and data experts to clarify data confidentiality concepts and find the best solution for RDBES and FDI.	Commission to set up a Workshop for NCs and data experts to clarify data confidentiality concepts and find the best solution for RDBES and FDI.	COM	2024	The RDBES data license has been simplified and aligned with other Data Calls and data types. All countries agrees that scientific bodies need to be able to use the data in a disaggregated way, but they diverge in the rules proposed for data publication. Some countries reminds that they are not allowed to submit the data if the national confidentiality rules are not ensured. NC need security in this issue. Additionally, there is a need to distinguish between non-sensitive (e.g. age, length) and sensitive (e.g. by-catch, discards) sapling data.	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R05					Comments DM 2024		R05 has been rephrased to accommodate the comments received; the inclusion not only of NCs but also data experts.					
Surveys	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_D01	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	D01	ongoing	Renewal costsharing agreements for WHB survey 2025 (IBWSS).	To decide on renewal of the cost-sharing agreement for the WHB survey.	NCs (DK, DE, ES, FR, IR, NL, SE)	Prior to the survey 2024.	The current cost-sharing agreement for the WHB survey will terminate at the end of 2024. Renewal of the agreement is foreseen.	YES	Do NCs agree to sign a cost-sharing agreement for the IBWSS survey for 2025?
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_D01					Result DM 2024		Agreed					
					Comments DM 2024		Agreement already signed, available at RCGs Multilateral and bilateral agreements' repository					

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
Surveys	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_D02	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	D02	ongoing	Renewal costsharing agreements for IESNS survey (ASH).	To decide on renewal of the cost-sharing agreement for the ASH survey.	NCs (DK, DE, IR, NL, SE)	Prior to the survey 2024.	The current cost-sharing agreement for the ASH survey will terminate at the end of 2024. Renewal of the agreements is foreseen.	YES	Do NCs agree to sign a cost-sharing agreement for the IESNS survey for 2025?
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_D02					Result DM 2024		Agreed					
					Comments DM 2024		Agreement already signed, available at RCGs Multilateral and bilateral agreements' repository					
EMT	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R06	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R06	ongoing	RCG recommends ICES to organise in 2024/2025 a workshop to establish the needs in terms of data acquisition, storing, and sharing for developing and implementing AI to review data from electronic monitoring (EM) sources, and particularly to complement data collection onboard RV with EM.	ICES to organise in 2024/2025 a workshop to establish the needs in terms of data acquisition, storing, and sharing for developing and implementing AI to review data from electronic monitoring (EM) sources, and particularly to complement data collection onboard RV with EM.	ICES	2025	In the RCG there is an interest to initiate partnerships between fisheries institutes to complement data collection onboard RV with EM and start collecting and labelling imagery data of catches to train detection/classification open-access or shared models that would be beneficial to all. It was agreed that a workshop could be organised by ICES in the coming year to kick start this work in the NANSEA and Baltic regions.	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R06					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
RCG	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R07	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R07	ongoing	RCG NANSEA and Baltic would like to ask the survey groups (EOSG) if benthic VME species are sampled according to the survey protocol and if a species ID manual exist for the area (maybe national). Please forward the materials to ISSG Survey chairs.	RCG NANSEA and Baltic would like to ask the survey groups (EOSG) if benthic VME species are sampled according to the a survey protocol and if a species ID manual exist for the area (maybe national). Please forward the materials to ISSG Survey chairs.	ICES EOSG	2025	EU Member States are obliged to sample benthic/invertebrate vulnerable Marine Ecosystem (VME) species according to the EU MAP (EU – 2021/1167 paragraph 4.1). To ensure a standardised sampling protocol within the same region the RCG NANSEA and Baltic would like to ask the survey groups if benthic VME species are sampled according to the survey protocol and if a species ID manual exist for the area (maybe national).	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R07					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					
RCG	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R08	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R08	ongoing	When control regulation Implementation Act is being reviewed, RCGs should be consulted when discussing the current Annexes X and XI, and article 22.	When control regulation Implementation Act is being reviewed, RCGs should be consulted when discussing the current Annexes X and XI, and article 22.	COM	ASAP	The revision of the control regulation 1224/2009 concluded 5 years after the initial Commission proposal in 2018 and entered into force in January 2024. The next step is the implementation with some provisions applying immediately, other provisions after 6 months, 2 years and 4 years or in 2029/2030.		
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R08					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					

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RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
RCG	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R09	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R09	ongoing	RCG recommends to establish a dialogue between the COM (DGMARE and DGENV) and Member States about the expectations from the Marine Action Plan and what is possible under the DCF.	To establish a dialogue between the COM (DGMARE and DGENV) and Member States about the expectations from the Marine Action Plan and what is possible under the DCF.	COM	ASAP	The EU Action Plan for protecting and restoring marine ecosystems aims to connect the environmental and fisheries policies to contribute to the delivery on the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy, as well as current obligations under both fisheries and environmental legislation. There is a need for a dialogue between the COM (DGMARE and DGENV) and Member States about what could be a possible compromise between what the Commission expects from Member States and what the Member States are able to implement.		
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R09					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					
Regional work plan	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_D03	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	D03	ongoing	MS to agree to start working on the development of RWPs 2028-2030	MS to start working on the development of RWPs 2028-2030	NCs	DM 2024	A roadmap for developing the RWP 2028-2030 is going to be developed in relation to all ISSGs contributing to RWPs. A plenary meeting of the ISSG will be scheduled after the submission of the NWP 2025-2027 to start planning the activities and their timelines. The main goal of this meeting will be to clarify achievements needed for TM June 2025 and TM June 2026 to meet the deadline of October 2026	YES	Do NCs agree to start working on the development of RWPs 2028-2030?

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RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_D03					Result DM 2024		Agreed					
					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					
Regional work plan	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R10	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R10	ongoing	MS to add lines in NWP (2025-2027) Table 2.1 for additional stocks Sardine 7e, Loligo 4, 7d, Pollack 4, 3a which are not in Table I (EU 2021/1167) but identified by end user needs, and optionally for other stocks in a similar situation.	MS to add lines in NWP (2025-2027) Table 2.1 for additional stocks Sardine 7e, Loligo 4, 7d, Pollack 4, 3a which are not in Table I (EU 2021/1167) but identified by end user needs, and optionally for other stocks in a similar situation.	NCs	October 2024	The TM considered the demands for addition or split of stocks emanating from the MS feedbacks, due to unavoidable evolution of targeted species and/or management areas for some species, departing from the list given in Table I of the EU-MAP Delegated Decision (EU 2021/1167). There was a consensus to consider acceptable that Table 2.1 proposed by the RCGs may drift away from the Table I of the EU Regulation if fully justified by end-users. It was the opinion of the TM that further work should be carried out to formally list these additions and/or modifications of management areas before modifying the entries of the Table 2.1.	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R10					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					

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RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

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Regional work plan	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_RI I	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	RI I	ongoing	For stocks identified in the RWP as reaching the collective 25% threshold (COM Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1168), i.e. if the sum of the shares of the Member States concerned exceeds 25% of the TAC, the Member States concerned shall share tasks relating to the collection of biological data at regional level to ensure sampling in accordance with end-user needs.	For stocks identified in the RWP as reaching the collective 25% threshold (COM Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1168), i.e. if the sum of the shares of the Member States concerned exceeds 25% of the TAC, the Member States concerned shall share tasks relating to the collection of biological data at regional level to ensure sampling in accordance with end-user needs.	NCs	October 2024	Following the thresholds for data collection specified in the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1168, where the collective 25 % threshold of TAC shares that are less than 10 % of the Union total is reached, the Member States concerned shall share tasks relating to the collection of biological data at marine region level to ensure that the relevant stocks are covered by sampling in accordance with end-user needs.	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_RI I					Comments DM 2024		The initial recommendation has been reformulated for clarity. The original recommendation can be found in 2024 RCG NANSEA & Baltic report part I					

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RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
CS small pelagic Baltic	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_RI 2	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R12	ongoing	Recommendation for RCG and ICES to write a joint support letter that will be sent from ICES to NCs to achieve access for MS to control data, which should then take contact to national control agencies to obtain access to control data that can support MS in submitting scientifically adjusted landings weights for RDBES ICES WGs.	Recommendation for ICES and RCG to write a joint support letter that will be sent from ICES to NCs to achieve access for MS to control data which should then take contact to national control agencies to obtain access to control data that can support MS in submitting scientifically adjusted landings weights for RDBES ICES WGs.	ICES	2024	There have been several reports on misreporting between sprat and herring in the Baltic Sea, it has however not been straightforward for MS to get access to the control data behind the reports. It was during the technical meeting decided to write a support letter from the RCG NANSEA& Baltic and ICES to the national authorities on providing access to control data for the national scientist conducting the data upload to ICES.	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_RI2					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					
CS small pelagic Baltic	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_RI 3	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R13	ongoing	RCG recommends that both the scientific landings and official landings to be mandatory in the RDBES format.	Both the scientific landings and official landings should be recommended to be mandatory in the RDBES format.	ICES WGRD BESGO V	2025	MS could report official and scientific landings in RDBES and explain difference, and that both the scientific landings are official landings should be recommended to be mandatory.	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_RI3					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					

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ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
CS pelagic freezer trawler NEA	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R14	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R14	ongoing	Identify and conduct two pilot studies in the 2nd half of 2024 conducted by both NLD and DEU for the same species*area combination.	Identify and conduct two pilot studies in the 2nd half of 2024 conducted by both NLD and DEU for the same species*area combination.	NCs (DE, NL)	2024	Simulation studies have been conducted to investigate annual sampling coverage for a suite of preselected stocks, and a sampling protocol was developed and tested during three pilot studies. The three pilot studies targeting herring (Pilot Study 2022), blue whiting (Pilot Study 2023), both carried out by the Dutch research institute, and mackerel (Pilot Study 2024), carried out by the German institute, indicate the feasibility of executing the developed common harmonized protocol during the observer trips on-board the freezer trawlers. However, the pilot studies also showed that the methodology in processing the age samples was not always practically feasible. In order to extend to the entire fleet, the protocol needs to be further developed and tested.	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R14					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					

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CS pelagic freezer trawler NEA	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R15	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R15	ongoing	In order to ensure a smooth transition in catch sampling for assessment purposes by the NLD, it is recommended that the NLD market sampling programme executing its current protocol runs simultaneously with the NLD observer programme executing the harmonized protocol for sampling the EU freezer trawler fleet for a substantial period of time.	NLD market sampling programme executing its current protocol runs simultaneously with the NLD observer programme executing the harmonized protocol for sampling the EU freezer trawler fleet for a substantial period of time.	NCs (NL)	2024	In order to ensure a smooth transition in catch sampling for assessment purposes by the NLD, it is recommended that the NLD market sampling programme executing its current protocol runs simultaneously with the NLD observer programme executing the harmonized protocol for sampling the EU freezer trawler fleet for a substantial period of time.	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R15					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					

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RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
Diadromous	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_RI6	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R16	ongoing	In the context of diadromous fishes data collection, RCG recommends ICES to: i) identify relevant group(s) for RCG and ICES interaction to target the data collection to end-user needs (e.g., WGEEL, WGBAST, WGNAS); and ii) inform such group(s) of the need for this interaction for developing the Regional Work Plans for data collection.	In the context of diadromous fishes data collection, RCG recommends ICES to: i) identify relevant group(s) for RCG and ICES interaction to target the data collection to end-user needs (e.g., WGEEL, WGBAST, WGNAS); and ii) inform such group(s) of the need for this interaction for developing the Regional Work Plans for data collection.	ICES	2025	In the context of the development of regional work plans, which aims to establish regionally harmonized approaches to data collection for supra-regional assessment, it became apparent that ICES end-users cannot be easily consulted by DCF coordination groups, as ICES working groups have clear rules of procedure and take over their tasks from ACOM or their respective clients (e.g. NASCO).	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_RI6					Comments DM 2024		The initial recommendation has been reformulated for better understanding. The original recommendation can be found in 2024 RCG NANSEA & Baltic report part I					
Stomach sampling	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_RI7	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R17	ongoing	MS participating in IBTS to incorporate not only stomach sampling but also stomach content analysis in the national work plans	MS participating in IBTS to incorporate not only stomach sampling but also stomach content analysis in the national work plans	NCs (DE, DK, FR, NL, SE)	October 2024	So far only the sampling of the stomachs have been incorporated into the national work plans for most of MS, and the incorporation of the analyses of the stomach contents into the work plans of the relevant MS would significantly advance the regionally coordinated stomach sampling plan in the North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat.	NO	

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ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R17					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					
Stomach sampling	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R18	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R18	ongoing	RCG recommends starting sampling gastro-intestinal tracts of all turbot caught during BITS survey.	WGBIFS to include sampling gastro-intestinal tracts of all turbot caught during BITS survey.	ICES WGBIFS	2025	Turbot is a relatively rare, piscivorous flatfish species. It is a data limited stock without a quota. The species occurs regularly, though rarely in the BITS catches. The feeding ecology in the Baltic Sea is largely unknown.	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R18					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					
Stomach sampling	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R19	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	R19	ongoing	RCG recommends that Baltic NCs assign experts to the ISSG 'Stomach sampling' to work on a regional plan for stomachs sampling and analysis in the Baltic	Baltic NCs assign experts to the ISSG 'Stomach sampling' to work on a regional plan for stomachs sampling and analysis in the Baltic	NCs (DK, EE, FI, DE, LV, LT, PL, SE)	2024	Region-wide coordination of stomach sampling is relevant only for piscivorous fish species. In the Baltic Sea this mainly comprises the fish species cod, whiting, turbot, brill, salmon, and sea trout. Potential end users of such data in the Baltic region are WGSAM and WGECOBAL.	NO	
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_R19					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					

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NC	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_D04	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	D04	ongoing	To collectively cover the total MS contribution to the total costs of the RCG Secretariat in 2024-2025	To collectively cover the total MS contribution to the total costs of the RCG Secretariat in 2024-2025	NCs	DM 2024	The ISSG NC met during the 2024 RCG ECON and 2024 RCG NANSEA Baltic technical meetings to work on the agreement on cost-sharing and to formulate a decision to cover MS contribution to the total cost of the RCG Secretariat in 2024-2025. The decision will be based on the text of the agreement drafted in Annex III of the RCG NANSEA Baltic TM Report Part I.	YES	Do NCs agree to collectively cover the total MS contribution to the total costs of the RCG Secretariat in 2024-2025?
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_D04					Result DM 2024		Agreed					
					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					
ISSGs 2024-2025	NANSEA BALTIC_2024_D05	2024	NANSEA BALTIC	D05	ongoing	Agree on proposed ISSGs to work during season 2024-2025 and ensure that experts and manpower is assigned to ISSG work.	The list of RCG ISSGs suggested by RCG NANS&EA and RCG Baltic to be confirmed to take place during season 2024-2025	NCs	DM 2024	Work in ISSG needs experts and manpower (approximately 1 week of work / ISSG and person). The ISSG work forces the MS to switch from working with a national focus to work with a more regional focus which is in line with idea of EU-MAP.	YES	Do NCs agree on the list of ISSG for season 2024-2025 and ensure that experts and manpower is assigned to ISSG work?
NANSEA BALTIC_2024_D05					Result DM 2024		Agreed					
					Comments DM 2024		No further comments					

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RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
RDB overviews	NANSEA BALTIC_2022_R01	2022	NANSEA BALTIC	R01	ongoing	ICES give download rights of RDB/RDBES data to ISSG chairs for the ISSG work	ICES give download rights of RDB/RDBES data to ISSG chairs for the ISSG work	ICES	DM 2022	At the moment RCG has not download rights and ISSG chairs have to do a request to ICES everytime they need the data. Direct access will increase the efficiency of ISSG work, which is especially relevant given the short deadlines ISSG has to prepare the overviews. *LDF also wants to give this recommendation (need for coordination)	NO	
Enduser and RCG	NANSEA BALTIC_2023_R01	2023	NANSEA BALTIC	R01	ongoing	Recommendation to ICES WGRDBESGOV to consider how ICES can take over the outputs created by ISSG RDB Overviews for ICES (WGs, Benchmarks)	Recommendation to ICES WGRDBESGOV to consider how ICES can take over the outputs created by ISSG RDB Overviews for ICES (WGs, Benchmarks)	ICES WGRDBESGOV	By the end of 2023	The RCG ISSG RDB catch, effort and sampling overviews currently produce outputs for ICES working groups. The overviews made for ICES WGBFAS can be seen as a test case. RCGs have access to EU MS data only. The main focus of the ISSG products is the regional coordination. It should be discussed with ICES how overviews and scripts developed can be taken over by ICES.	NO	

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

ISSG/SG	ID (auto, just drag)	Year	RCG	R or D	Status	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Decision to be taken by NC?	Formulation of the Decision
Surveys	NANSEA BALTIC_2023_R05	2023	NANSEA BALTIC	R05	ongoing	Recommendation to the Commission to provide solutions for continuation of scientific monitoring in spatially restricted zones	Provide guidance on the tools to be used to ensure the continuation of scientific monitoring in spatially restricted zones	DG MARE	TM 2024	Provide guidance on the tools to be used to ensure the continuation of scientific monitoring in spatially restricted zones, i.e. through licensing, Natura management, etc. This could include the emphasis on scientific monitoring that is required under legal obligations (i.e. mandatory surveys in the EU MAP) and may include exceptions for specific survey types. Apart from this, experimental and ad-hoc research can be considered as well	NO	

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Decisions and recommendations

RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic – Next season (2024 - 2025)

Chairing

- RCG NANSEA: Josefine Egekvist (DNK) and Rita Vasconcelos (PRT)
- RCG Baltic: Vilda Griūnienė (LTU)

Technical meeting – Dates and venue

- Dates: 10 -13 June 2025; 1 day virtual meeting 3 June 2025
- Venue: Lysekil (Sweden)

Intersessional groups

- Fifteen ISSGs for 2024-2025

InterSessioal SubGroup	ISSG name short	ISSG chair
Enduser and RCG interaction	End-user and RCG	RCG chairs
RDBES catch, effort and sampling overviews	RDBES Overviews	Lucia Zarauz, Ana Claudia Fernandes
Métier and transversal variable issues	Métier/transversal	Josefine Egekvist, Sébastien Demaneche
Electronic Monitoring Technologies	EMT	Gildas Glemerec, Sander Delacauw
Regional Work Plans	RWP	Maria Hansson, Els Torreele
Diadromous Fishes	Diadromous	Josefin Sundin, Simon Weltersbach, Marko Freese
Surveys	Surveys	Sieto Verver, Christoph Stransky
Case Study on the trawl fishery in Iberian Waters	CS Iberian Waters	Rita Vasconcelos
Case Study on freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the NEA	CS pelagic freezer trawler	Harriet van Overzee, Jens Ulleweit
Case study on fisheries for small pelagics in the Baltic	CS small pelagics Baltic	Katja Ringdahl, Marie Storr-Paulsen
Evaluation of the data collected for the SSF at EU level	SSF	Estanis Mugerza
Optimisation of ETP bycatch sampling	ETP	Estanis Mugerza, Christian von Dorrien
Regionally coordinated stomach sampling	Stomach sampling	Pierre Cresson, Matthias Bernreuther
Recreational fishery	Recreational	Harry Strehlow, Eneko Bachiller
National Correspondents	NC	Anna Hasslow, Anja Boye, Sieto Verver

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

Annex I: Details on the decision between the NCs on funding of the RCGs Secretariat 2024 – 2025

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Details on the decision between the National Correspondents on funding of the RCGs Secretariat 2024-2025

September 2024

Having regard:

- EU Regulation 2017/1004 stipulating that each Member State shall ensure that its national correspondent has a sufficient mandate to represent its Member State in the regional coordination groups referred to in the regulation.
- The 2022 decision by the NC's to agree on the principle of implementing a long-term secretariat in support of the work of all RCGs.
- Regulation 2017/1004 article 9.1 stipulating that MS shall coordinate their data collection activities within the same region.
- Regulation 2017/1004 article 9.2 stipulating the establishment of Regional Coordination Groups for marine regions.
- The establishment of the Regional Coordination Group for Economic affairs, overarching all marine regions and including all EU landlocked Member States.
- The outcomes of the EU co-funded project SECWEB.
- The acceptance of EU project SECWEB 2.0 and by this accepting CETMAR as the service provider.
- The continued wish for uninterrupted secretarial support of the RCG work.

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Having acknowledged:

- That the total activities of the Secretariat can't be executed in full without the support of the MS.
- The distribution key for the cost sharing is based on the MS's total EMFAF budget 2021-2027 as well as the MS's membership of the respective RCGs form the basis for the MS's contribution to the funding. Reference to SECWEB project describing the distribution key for the cost sharing <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/d/dcf/annex-19-ensuring-future-operation-and-funding>
- To reference this agreement in every relevant National or Regional Workplan.

The following Member States have agreed to collectively cover the total MS contribution to the total costs of the RCG secretariat in 2024-2025: BEL, BGR, CZE, DNK, DEU, EST, IRL, GRC, ESP, FRA, HRV, ITA, CYP, LVA, LTU, HUN, MLT, NLD, AUT, POL, PRT, ROU, SVN, FIN, SWE.

Distribution key:

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

Annex I: Details on the decision between the NCs on funding of the RCGs Secretariat 2024 – 2025

Application of the selected model for the distribution key leads to the following costs by MS by year:

	Annual contribution by MS according to the total EMFAF budget for the period 2021-2027	Annual contribution by MS according number of RCGs in which each MS is participating	TOTAL MS annual contribution (€)
BEL	152	463	615
BGR	321	756	1077
CZE	113	154	268
DNK	759	714	1473
DEU	800	937	1737
EST	368	937	1305
IRL	538	686	1224
GRC	1417	979	2396
ESP	4233	1511	5743
FRA	2142	1288	3430
HRV	921	979	1900
ITA	1958	1202	3160
CYP	145	979	1124
LVA	510	937	1446
LTU	231	937	1168
LUX	0	0	0
HUN	142	154	297
MLT	82	979	1062
NLD	370	686	1056
AUT	25	154	180
POL	1936	937	2872
PRT	1430	909	2339
ROU	614	756	1370
SVN	90	756	847
SVK	58	154	212
FIN	271	405	676
SWE	438	714	1152
			40.125

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

Annex I: Details on the decision between the NCs on funding of the RCGs Secretariat 2024 – 2025

Duration and governance:

This agreement covers funding for secretarial activities not covered by SECWEB 2.0 in support of the RCGs in 2024 and 2025. Substantial changes to legal and/or financial obligations automatically lead to a review of this agreement. Duly justified, participating Member States may request a review as well. This agreement is pan regional by nature and is governed by the collective of National Correspondents, operating as the Intersessional Subgroup of National Correspondents under the remit of the RCGs.

Invoices should be sent by CETMAR to the MS concerned before November 1 of the respective year. Individual MS and CETMAR shall cooperate to establish the required documentation for the respective MS if needed. CETMAR shall report the activities executed during the previous term to the RCGs yearly.

Activities:

The activities covered under secretarial activities comprise at a minimum of:

- ✓ A full-time dedicated Secretariat support service for the RCGs enables a consistent approach to administering RCG activities, facilitates communication, and enhancing the intersessional work, supporting also the work of sub-groups.
- ✓ A dynamic and permanently updated website will be kept available including as features:
 - Integration – allowing seamless synchronization with third-party information needs and requests.
 - Responsive display – to serve content across multiple devices, screens, and browsers.
 - User experience- maintaining a satisfactory user experience throughout the website sections.
 - Accessibility – To any interested visitor in a user-friendly way across the website sections.
 - Retention- keeping visitors coming back to the website.
 - Links to relevant restricted access sites and virtual environments.
- ✓ The Visual identity for the RCGs is increasingly consolidated and visibility and understanding of the work by the RCGs is enhanced for the relevant stakeholder groups.
- ✓ A regularly updated Stakeholders' database improves the communication function among the RCGs' experts and the stakeholders' community.
- ✓ Internal communication protocols and help-desk in place makes it easier for any new comer to efficiently join, adopt responsibilities, and contribute to the RCGs objectives and work commitments.
- ✓ The public description of the secretariat functions, operational working protocols and commitments will build trust and enhance the whole network transparency and accountability.

Annex II: Participants list

Name	MS	Role / Affiliation	Presence
Simona Vasileva NICHEVA	BG	NC/ Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture	Physical
Kolyo ZHELEV	BG	Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture	Physical
Jiří DUBEC	CZ	NC/ Department of the Civil Service of Forest	Physical
Charis CHARILAOU	CY	NC Representative/ Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment	Physical
Christoph STRANSKY	DE	NC/ Thünen Institute of Sea Fisheries	Physical
Anja GADGÅRD BOYE	DK	NC/ DTU Aqua	Physical
Josefine Egekvist	DK	RCG NANSEA co-chair	Physical
Jeppe Strandgaard Herring	DK	RCG ECON incoming chair	Online
Katariina KURINA	EE	NC/ Estonian Ministry of the Environment	Physical
Juana POZA	ES	NC Representative/ Spanish General Fisheries Secretariat	Physical
Heikki LEHTINEN	FI	NC/ Natural Resources Department	Physical
Joni TIAINENE	FI	LUKE	Physical
Anaïs ROUSSEL	FR	NC/ Direction Générale Des Affaires Maritimes, De La Pêche Et De L'Aquaculture	Physical
Kostas KATSAFAROS	GR	NC/ Hellenic Ministry of Rural Development & Food Directorate General for Fisheries	Physical
Irene Tzouramani	GR	RCG ECON co-chair	Online
Ivana VUKOV	HR	NC/ Ministry of Agriculture of Republic of Croatia	Physical
Matija Pofuk	HR	Ministry of Agriculture of Republic of Croatia	Physical
Ágnes Irma GYÖRGY	HU	NC/ Institute of Agricultural Economics Nonprofit Kft. (AKI)	Physical
Linda O'HEA	IE	NC/ Marine Institute, Fisheries and Ecosystem Advisory Services	Physical
Enrico ARNIERI	IT	NC Representative	Physical
Jolita Nečiūnienė	LT	NC Representative	Physical
Didzis USTUPS	LV	NC/ Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment	Physical
Maksims Kovsars	LV	RCG LDF chair	Physical
Jurgen MIFSUD	MT	NC/ RCG LP chair	Physical
Sieto VERVER	NL	NC/ Centre for Fisheries Research, WUR	Physical
Hans van Oostenbrugge	NL	RCG ECON co-chair	Online
Irek WOJCIK	PL	NC/ Sea Fisheries Institute	Physical
Maciej Adamowicz	PL	RCG BAL chair	Physical
Cristina ROSA	PT	NC/ Ministerio do Mar. Direção-Geral de Recursos Naturais, Segurança e Serviços Marítimos	Physical
Rita Vasconcelos	PT	RCG NANSEA co-chair	Physical

2024 Decision meeting – RCGs decisions and recommendations

Annex II: Participants list

Name	MS	Role / Affiliation	Presence
Alexandru Gheorge	RO	NC/ National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture	Physical
Anna HASSLOW	SE	NC/ Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	Physical
Tim BERGINC	SI	NC/ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food	Physical
Monika Sterczewska	EU	DG MARE, Unit C3	Physical
Leonie O´Dowd	EU	DG MARE, Unit C3	Online
Venetia Kostopoulou	EU	DG MARE, Unit C3	Physical
Rosa Maria Fernandez	ES	RCG´s Secretariat	Physical
Susana Rivero	ES	RCG´s Secretariat	Online