

**DCF – DIALOGUE MEETING OF NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS
17 JULY 2012 from 9.30 to 13.00 and from 14.30 to 17.30**

**CENTRE ALBERT BORSCHETTE
Rue Froissart, 36; 1040 Bruxelles
Salle AB-0C**

MINUTES

A. Welcome of participants

DG MARE welcomed the participants, including Croatian participants, who attended a Dialogue Meeting of National Correspondents, as an observer, for the first time.

Participants were reminded that this meeting is included in the list of Data Collection Framework (DCF) meetings eligible for EU co-financing and would be reimbursed as part of the cost claims for implementation of 2012 National Programmes.

B. Adoption of the agenda

Two items were added to the agenda, item *C.1.5 (Contract with DevStat on implementation of the DCF)* and item *C.2 (Feedback from Member States on DCF processes and procedures)*. The modified agenda was adopted.

C. The current Data Collection Framework: State of play and possible improvements

C.1 Feedback of Commission on implementation of Data Collection Framework

C.1.1 General Information

a) Regional Coordination meetings

- Regional Coordination Meeting (RCM) for Mediterranean and Black Sea has been postponed. Meeting is now to be held on 23 July – 27 July 2012 in Madrid, Spain. Chairs of RCMs are reminded to inform participants of changes of meeting dates in due time, shall such changes in meeting dates be required.
- National Correspondents (NCs) are invited to attend RCMs and meetings of the 'Planning Group on Economic Issues' (PGECON).
- DG MARE is planning to develop a database with recommendations of RCMs and the Liaison Meetings (LMs), as well as STECF recommendations, that have been issued in the past.

b) Access to DCF data

- 'Data coverage and quality reports' for JRC data calls are to be published on the DCF website.
- Demonstration by *Fabrizio Natale* (JRC) of 'Fishery Data Dissemination' website. Website is to go online after a joint press release by JRC and DG MARE which is currently being prepared.
Data on website are already publically available within Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) reports. Data is derived from JRC data

calls. The data is thus not raw data, but validated data. The website will include a clear disclaimer that scientific expertise is required to interpret the data.

JRC to provide login details for website to NCs, allowing them to already access the website now before its official launch, to provide feedback to the JRC.

C.1.2 & C.1.3 Submission of Annual Reports & Claims for Reimbursement 2010 & 2011

DG MARE gave presentation on state of play concerning Annual Reports and Claims for Reimbursement for 2010 and 2011. The group noted that Claims for Reimbursement have been treated more rapidly by DG MARE recently.

Letter sent to Member States on data transmission to end users in 2011

- The group suggested apparent data transmission failures to be assessed by National Correspondents (NCs) and possibly a STECF Expert Working Group (EWG) or Regional Coordination Meetings (RCMs) before high-level correspondence on this matter is initiated.
- Further, the group pointed out the absence of clear criteria for categorising the severity of apparent data transmission failures and thus the identification of the corresponding financial reductions under the financial regulation.
- DG MARE will consider how to improve the feedback received from end users concerning data transmission; and how to follow-up this feedback with Member States.

C.1.4 Submission of 2012 amendments to 2011-2013 National Programmes and related pre-financing payments

DG MARE gave presentation on state of play concerning 2012 amendments to 2011-2013 National Programmes and related pre-financing payments.

DG MARE will continue its efforts to improve the follow-up of data transmission failures.

C.1.5 Contract with DevStat on implementation of the DCF

DevStat has been assessing several Member States' implementation of the DCF. The group highlighted that discussions with *DevStat* on their study visits to individual Member States were useful with regards to improving implementation of the DCF in the concerned Member States, and with regard to raising issues to be addressed when developing the 2014-2020 Multi-Annual Programme for Data Collection (DC MAP).

C.2 Feedback from Member States on DCF processes and procedures

- The revised financial forms format is not considered to be a simplification to some members of the group. Format is to be reconsidered by DG MARE.
- Further, the group agreed that a compilation of recommendations of RCMs and STECF, as well as of derogations to National Programmes (NPs) is to be produced by DG MARE that will facilitate evaluation of Member States' Annual Reports, and of data transmission to end users.
- Member States are requested to inform DG MARE of changes of the National Correspondents (NCs) or their contact details.

D. New Multi-Annual Programme for Data Collection 2014-2020

General issues

A note of DG MARE on the 2014-2020 Multi-Annual Programme for Data Collection (DC MAP) was distributed to the group ahead of the meeting.

The 2014-2020 Multi-Annual Programme for Data Collection (DC MAP) can only be adopted once the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) regulation has been adopted. Considering the current state of negotiations in the Council and the European Parliament it is likely that the time available between the adoption of the DC MAP and the start of its implementation period (i.e. 1st January 2014) will be short. DG MARE highlighted the importance of initiating the development of the DC MAP at present. Further DG MARE highlighted the importance of Member States initiating the development of sections of national EMFF Operational Programmes (OPs) on data collection and 2014 Annual Work Plans at the start of 2013. Member States shall submit the complete EMFF Operational Programmes (OPs) concerning data collection to the Commission by 31st October 2013. This will have to be the case even if Member States will not be able to submit the entire Operational Programme by this date. The note of DG MARE on the DC MAP shall serve as guidance in this process until DG MARE has produced an initial draft of the DC MAP.

Detailed discussion on the development of DC MAP

DG MARE presented a list of issues and options to be considered during the development of the DC MAP. The group discussed a number of questions in relation to the individual issues:

Issue 1 - Data needs

What will the CFP need in 2020 in terms of basic data, and therefore what is the Data Collection really used for? Assessment of fish stocks? Managing marine resources? Overall mapping of the fishing sector? Impact assessments of management options?

Options

- *More inclusive data; maximizing biological, technical, scientific and socio-economic information.*
- *Business as usual.*

Options developed by the group

- It would be difficult to extend the scope of the DC MAP compared to the scope of the current Data Collection Framework (DCF) due to the funding available being limited, and as a result of the current difficulties of some Member States to comply with data collection requirements.
- The focus should be on excluding data from the DC MAP that are currently being collected under the DCF, but are not being used by end users. Further, the focus should be on improving the quality of the data. Also, regarding the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), DC MAP should only include data relevant for the MSFD indicator related to fisheries.
- Nevertheless, it is recognised that the direction that the discussions on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) have been taking will mean that the scope of the DC MAP relative to the DCF will have to be adjusted, for example towards collection of additional socio-economic data.

Issue 2 – Simplification of rules and better flexibility in the legal framework

Options

- *Specific rules in an implementing or delegated act.*
- *Better coordination between EU DC MAP and National Programmes.*
- *Avoidance of paper annexes – use of Master Data Register.*
- *Financial EU contribution in shared management / multi-annual basis.*
- *Mid-term review.*

Options developed by the group

- Simplification and harmonisation of data formats for storage and transmission of data will be essential.
- The setting up of a Master Data Register for providing year-to-year flexibility concerning the list of species for which data is collected is welcomed. The group agreed, however, that adding species to the list for which data is to be collected could be problematic in terms of the financial implications that this might have. A clear procedure for adopting changes to the species list would have to be defined which could be based on RCMs making suggestions and a STECF Expert Working Group (EWG) approving the changes.
- DG MARE explained the rationale for including ex-ante conditionalities on data collection. The ex-ante conditionalities allow the evaluation of the effectiveness of data collection in Member States whilst data collection is transferred to a shared management system.
- A re-distribution of funds between Member States (MSs) is not foreseen (national allocations), but support to cross-border activities will be possible.
- Regional coordination will already have to occur when MSs will be drafting the sections of the OPs on data collection and when drafting 2014 WPs, in order to avoid large subsequent changes to these documents during the implementation period.

Issue 3 – Data collected under other legislation

How does the data collected under the DCF fit with data collected under other legislations?

Options

- *References to other EU legislation where possible.*
- *Avoid overlaps in the collection of Vessel monitoring system (VMS) data; effort and other transversal data.*
- *Use EUROSTAT definitions where possible.*
- *Use synergies with Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) concerning ecosystem indicators*

Options developed by the group

- Duplication of data collection should be avoided.
- A clear distinction should be made between scientific and control data. Transversal variables (e.g. effort) should be left out of the DC MAP. Providing access to VMS data to end users remains an issue. Data calls under the Control Regulation should become possible. Implications of this type of discussion on the Control Regulation will need to be analysed at a later stage.

Issue 4 – Simplification of data formats

Options

- *One data format to be used by MSs to store and transmit data.*
- *Regional database(s) will facilitate move towards a single data format.*
- *Single format should be compatible with different RFMO data formats as much as possible.*

Options developed by the group

- *Standardisation should occur by defining a single data output format. This would, in particular, be useful when considering that possibly more end users will use data in the future.*
- *Or, end users should extract data directly from regional databases. Data calls could simply result in updates of these databases by MSs. Under this model, access to regional databases would have to be restricted to clearly defined end users.*

Issue 5 – Involvement of third countries, RFMOs, FPAs

Options

- *Third countries as observers in RCMs.*
- *Improved exchanges with data managers from RFMOs.*
- *Harmonizing definitions and formats.*
- *Flexible integration of data collection obligations stemming from international bodies.*

Options developed by the group

- *Data collected under DC MAP and data required by RFMOs should correspond. DC MAP should also play a role in shaping the data requirements of RFMOs.*

Issue 6 – Confidentiality of data

Options

- *Harmonization of confidentiality rules contained in different regulations*
- *Reference made in EU DC-MAP to rules in other regulations*
- *Use of a standard EUROSTAT definition if possible*

Options developed by the group

- *DG MARE highlighted that the aim should be to establish common confidentiality rules in the DC MAP.*
- *The group pointed out that such common confidentiality rules would have to include a clear definition of end users, and rules on access to data.*

Issue 7 – Harmonization of data management and reporting tools

Options

- *Regional Database(s) for fisheries data to be put into action and further developed*
- *Reference in EU DC MAP to rules in other regulations*

- *Use of standard EUROSTAT definitions if possible*

Options developed by the group

- DC MAP could include provisions on regional databases. The degree of detail of these provisions remains to be determined. DG MARE stressed that regional coordination and regional databases should ultimately be the result of a bottom-up process.
- Regarding regional databases in the Mediterranean (GFCM), DG MARE highlighted the importance of initiating the setting up of regional databases, even if this would only concern the EU members of the GFCM, and even if progress could be slow. EU can support such projects technically and/or financially.
- Last meeting of PGECON recognised that socio-economic data cannot be included in regional databases. Nevertheless, a possibility to exchange this data at regional level should exist.

Issue 8 – Regional coordination

What will different regions need in the future in terms of data for assessment/management purposes including multi-species management plans?

Options

- *Regional Coordination Meetings (RCMs) get more importance and tasks.*
- *Broader participation in RCMs (involvement of important third countries).*
- *Use of regional databases for assessment/management purposes.*

Options developed by the group

- In general, regional coordination should not be limited to physical meetings, but exchanges should also occur throughout the year.
- RCMs to serve as platforms for regional coordination. This could possibly include the assessment of the compliance of Member States with data collection obligations and their response to data calls by end users.
- Stakeholder participation in RCMs, as observers, is seen as beneficial.

DG MARE invited National Correspondents to send written comments by end of August on the issues discussed during the meeting, and to send written comments on the remaining issues to be considered during the development of the DC MAP, as outlined in the DG MARE note. Further, there will be possibilities for additional discussions on DC MAP in autumn. The Portuguese National Correspondent informed the group of a workshop on aquaculture to be held on 5 to 8 November in Lisbon, at which some issues relevant to the development of the DC MAP will be discussed.