

## MARE/2020/08 Annex 1:

### **Establishing Regional Work Plans (RWP) for the following regions covered by the work of RCGs: Baltic / North Atlantic, North Sea, Eastern Arctic / Mediterranean & Black Seas / long distance fisheries / large pelagics**

#### **0. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

##### **Work accomplished under previous grants and pilot studies**

The MARE/2016/22 grant on *strengthening regional cooperation in the area of fisheries data collection* asked for regional sampling plans. The outcomes were discussed in all RCGs and were also presented during the 2019 RCG and Liaison meetings<sup>1</sup>.

In particular, the following outputs were realised under grant MARE/2016/22<sup>2</sup>.

From annex 1, on biological data collection in EU waters North Sea, Eastern Arctic and North Atlantic (fishPi2 project) and Mediterranean and Black Sea (STREAM project):

- WP3: Regional sampling plan for 2019 covering commercial fisheries/stock/métiers.
- WP4: Regional sampling plan for 2019 covering the collection of data on fisheries impact on ecosystem. This included:
  1. data stomach content of fish to know predator-prey relations required for multi-species stock assessment
  2. co-occurrence and relative abundance of species/stocks to estimate their ecological relationships (predator/prey, competition, mutualism, their role in ecological processes, etc.)
  3. by-catch of non-target species, such as protected, endangered or threatened species.
- WP5: Small scale fisheries (SSF) and marine recreational fisheries (MRF).

From annex 3, on biological data collection on high migratory species, large pelagic stocks (ReCoLaPe project):

- WP2: Regional sampling plan for 2019 on Mediterranean swordfish with longlines and the tropical tuna purse seine fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean.

From annex 2, on socio-economic data collection for fisheries, aquaculture and the processing industry at EU level (SecFish project):

<sup>1</sup> Detailed information can be found on DCF website <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/regional-coordination>

<sup>2</sup> Access to relevant final reports: <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/docs/regional-grants>

- WP2: Harmonization of methodologies for sampling designs and estimation methods for fleet and aquaculture economic data collection.
- WP3: Development and implementation of common methodologies to disaggregate economic variables by activity and area.
- WP4: Methodologies for estimation of intangible assets in EU fisheries.

In addition, under EU-MAP 2017-2019 and EU-MAP 2020-2021, Member States had the opportunity to test sampling through pilot studies. The EU-MAP refers to the possibility for conducting pilot studies on the following four topics (topics 2 to 4 are referenced in the EU-MAP while topic 1 is referenced in the Work Plan and the Annual Report templates):

- Pilot Study 1: Relative share of catches of recreational fisheries compared to commercial fisheries.
- Pilot Study 2: Level of fishing and impact of fisheries on the biological resources and marine ecosystems. Chapter III, point 3 of the EU-MAP, including:
  - a) For all types of fisheries, incidental by-catch of all birds, mammals and reptiles and fish protected;
  - b) Data to assist in the assessment of the impact of fisheries in Union waters and outside Union waters on marine habitats;
  - c) Data for estimating the level of fishing and the impact of fishing activities on marine biological resources and on marine ecosystems.
- Pilot Study 3: Data on employment by education level and nationality. Chapter III, point 6 of the EU-MAP.
- Pilot Study 4: Environmental data on aquaculture. Chapter III, point 6 of the EU-MAP.

The legal text leaves some flexibility for pilot studies, therefore not all MS conduct pilot studies on all topics, nor through all years. Furthermore, MS have different approaches to integrating pilot studies into their work plans; some Member States run a pilot study on a topic (for example, pilot study 2.a on incidental by-catch) which has already been incorporated into the routine work plan, while other Member States wait until a regional decision is taken to begin sampling.

### **Future challenges**

One of the main purposes of the RCGs is to prepare regional work plans (RWP)<sup>3</sup>, which shall be compatible with the DCF Regulation and with the EU MAP. RWP may include:

- regional sampling designs and strategies,
- procedures, methods, quality assurance and quality control for collecting and processing data, and

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<sup>3</sup> Article 9 of the Regulation (EU) 2017/1004, points 8 and following.

- conditions for delivery of data in regional databases.

However - while some common parts of national work plans have been elaborated and currently exist (e.g. common meetings to attend, common pilot studies, as is the case for PETs in the Mediterranean) - no RCG has come forward to date (Spring 2020) with a proposal for a regional work plan.

Despite the substantial work done on sampling through grants and pilot studies, no final decisions were taken about formalising and implementing regional sampling plans, and feeding them into the preparation of the regional work plans. The proposals that came out of the MARE/2016/22 grants were discussed in all RCGs but MS expressed the need to further explore the feasibility and the contribution of the regional proposals for their national data collection programmes.

This indicates that discussions in the RCGs do not always go sufficiently beyond the national perspectives to allow coming to concrete, coordinated regional approaches and the implementation thereof.

Starting from 2020, further progress will clearly have to be made in the RCGs, and coordinated with MS, to devise regional work plans, agree on them in the relevant RCGs, and put them into practice. The Commission expects proposals for regional work plans from the RCGs as soon as possible, in line with the EU-MAP for 2022 onwards. The next EU-MAP will not foresee pilot studies anymore but will see the relevant obligations integrated into the regular, compulsory data collection.

It needs to be borne in mind that RWP are always implemented nationally as there is no regional implementation body. Hence, it is to be expected that this will require an intense process of discussions among MS and in the RCGs about sharing responsibilities, expected contributions, decision making and adoption processes, and how to implement etc., which will need to be managed in an harmonised, cooperative and transparent way.

## **1. WORK PACKAGE 1: COMPILING INFORMATION AND IDENTIFYING GAPS**

Based on what has been achieved under the previous grants and the MS pilot studies, as well as any other relevant sources, applicants will compile information on the elements that already exist to be fed into regional work plans. This compilation should address one or several of the topics/issues relevant for regional work plans for a particular region covered by the work of RCGs.

Such relevant topics could be, in a non-exhaustive list:

- commercial fisheries
- data collection on SSF and MRF
- fisheries impact on ecosystem:
  - a. food-web
  - b. by-catch of non-target species, especially on PETs

c. impact of fisheries on marine habitat

Other topics where regional coordination is identified to be of value should also be further explored in this context. The choice of topic(s), and where relevant the limitation to certain topics, should be clearly explained and reasoned.

The compilation of information should result in the identification of gaps in the information that will need to be filled in to draft meaningful regional work plans on the topic(s) in question.

For the purpose of this work package, in addition of reviewing written sources of information, applicants are expected to contact relevant knowledge holders, e.g. MS national correspondents, experts in charge of the relevant previous grants/pilot studies, and chairs of RCGs. Contact with relevant services of the Commission may be considered as well as sources of further information (e.g. Directorate-General Joint Research Centre (JRC), Directorate-General European Statistics (EUROSTAT), Directorate-General Environment (DG ENV), Directorate-General Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE)). This list of possible correspondents is not exhaustive and should be adjusted and extended by the applicant as seen fit.

Deliverable 1: The results of this compilation and identification of gaps should be presented as a “map” of what exists, what are the best elements and approaches already developed, and what additional information is still necessary to be able to develop regional work plans. This overview of the state of play, data gaps and needs will help to focus the following work packages.

## **2. WORK PACKAGE 2: FILLING INFORMATION GAPS**

Based on the existing information and the information gaps identified in work package 1, applicants will generate, in a targeted way, the information and other inputs that are still necessary to elaborate regional work plans for the particular region and, if relevant, the particular topic(s) addressed.

This gathering of information should take place in collaboration with MS national correspondents and data collection institutions, RCG chairs and members, fishers, NGOs, the industry and other relevant interlocutors. Tasks to be performed can include the organisation of workshops and meetings, but can also include case studies (e.g. to implement/further test methodologies chosen).

It is imperative for the success of this work package that MS in the particular regional setting are brought together to collaborate on addressing the knowledge and information gaps in a collaborative and unified fashion.

Deliverable 2: The minutes or brief reports of any workshops, meetings or other creative tools through which stakeholder engagement was stimulated should be presented, as well as case study reports for any such studies carried out.

### **3. WORK PACKAGE 3: ESTABLISHING DECISION MAKING STRUCTURES/PROCESSES**

Building on the collaboration structures developed and used under work package 2, the applicant should establish structures for discussions, exchange and decision making with the relevant RCG, including with its broader institutional embeddedness in national data collection structures etc., that will enable RCGs to come to commonly agreed decisions on regional work plans.

Deliverable 3: A short description - agreed with the relevant RCG (in coordination with national correspondents) - of the agreed decision making structures for developing the regional work plan should be presented.

### **4. WORK PACKAGE 4: DRAFTING THE WORK PLAN**

Based on the work under work packages 1 to 3, the applicants should develop, in a co-creative work process with the relevant RCG, a draft regional work plan on the topic(s) that were identified as relevant. This draft regional work plan should bring together the existing knowledge from earlier grants and MS pilot studies, as well as the additional work carried out under this grant, and must be endorsed by the relevant RCG.

The draft regional work plan should be in line with the EU-MAP in force from 2022 onwards<sup>4</sup>, presented in an appropriate structure or template (possibly based on the existing template for national work plans), and ready for approval by the Commission. It must be realistic and practicable in its scope and approach, and come with an implementation strategy as well as an indication of the necessary implementation tools, in order to be put into practice at the level of the region and its MS within a short delay. In terms of timing, as an indicative date, the objective should be to finalise the draft regional work plan by October 2021 for work covering the period from 2022 onwards. The applicant shall in its offer indicate a clear timeline, in the form of a “roadmap”, that is deemed reasonable for the development of the draft regional work plan.

Deliverable 4: A draft regional work plan, co-created with the RCG, should be prepared and presented to the Commission for approval. A summary of the draft regional work plan, elaborating on its main aspects and approach, as well the strategy for its implementation, should be produced. A slideshow, on the summary of the draft regional work plan should be prepared and presented to the Commission at the final meeting.

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<sup>4</sup> In as far as the details of the EU-MAP from 2022 are established by the time the draft regional work plan is produced.