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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND
THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

**Implementation of the Community framework for the collection and management of
data needed to conduct the common fisheries policy**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The systematic collection of reliable basic data on fisheries is a cornerstone for the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

As far back as 1993 the Council recognised “*the necessity to maintain, extend or create an appropriate data base, covering biological, ecological, technical and socio-economic aspects, as vital for the implementation of the CFP.*”¹

A legal Community framework for the collection and management of such data was put in place in 2000 with the adoption of a Council Regulation² and a Council Decision³, followed in 2001 by a Commission Regulation⁴ laying down the detailed rules of application.

This framework aims to consolidate and to strengthen the existing data collection activities in Member States. Through a better co-ordination and co-operation of these activities the efficiency of the collection and management of data will be improved and the provision of Community financial support should facilitate data collection.

The Council Regulation stipulates in Article 10 that “*the Commission shall present to the European Parliament and the Council at three yearly intervals and for the first time by December 2003, a report evaluating the measures taken by each Member State, the appropriateness of the methods used and the results achieved as regards the data collection and management referred to in this Regulation. This report shall also evaluate the utilisation by the Community of the data collected*”. The same Article states that “*By 31 December 2003 the Commission shall review whether it is appropriate to extend the range of data collected under this Regulation*”.

This report responds to this legal requirement and is based on the information received from Member States on the tasks carried out during 2002. Although experience with the data collection framework has been briefer than originally foreseen, an early review is appropriate to adjust the technically complex Community framework for data collection.

The improvement of the data collection framework for the collection and management of data needed to evaluate the situation of fisheries resources and the fisheries sector is a basic step towards carrying out the CFP. Difficulties are generally to be expected at the outset of such an ambitious and technically complex process. From the beginning, the Commission has assumed that the establishment of national programmes to systematically collect the data, including the economic ones, would be a real challenge for the Member States and the Commission. Despite the difficulties identified in this report, the Commission believes that a

¹ Council Document SN 3289/1/93 of 24 July 1993.

² Council Regulation (EC) N° 1543/2000 of 29 June 2000 establishing a Community Framework for the collection and management of the data needed to conduct the common fisheries policy – OJ L 176, 15.7.2000, p.1, (hereinafter, “Council Regulation N° 1543/2000”).

³ Council Decision N° 439/2000 EC of 29 June 2000 on a financial contribution from the Community towards the expenditure incurred in Member States in collecting data, and for financing studies and pilot projects for carrying out the common fisheries policy – OJ L 176, 15.7.2000, p. 42.

⁴ Commission Regulation (EC) N° 1639/2001 of 25 July 2001 establishing the minimum and extended Community programmes for the collection of data in the fisheries sector and laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) N° 1543/2000 – OJ L 222, 17.8.2001, p. 53 (hereinafter, “Commission Regulation N° 1639/2001”).

good start has been made and positive long-term effects are expected for each Member State and for the Commission.

2. EXPERIENCE TO DATE

2.1. The National programmes of Member states

Member States submitted their national programmes for the first time during 2001 covering the year 2002. The Programmes were evaluated with the assistance of external experts, the Scientific Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) and the services of the Commission resulting in the formal adoption of the Commission Decision on the financial contribution towards the expenditure incurred by Member States in August 2002. The same procedure was followed for 2003.

Based on the experience of 2002 and following the recommendation of the STECF concerning the scientific programmes and the Commission concerning the introduction of standardised financial tables, the submissions for the exercise 2003 and 2004 have been significantly improved. This continuous improvement in the overall quality of successive submissions from Member States is encouraging. However, some programmes remain poorly integrated as a result of a lack of co-ordination at national and international levels.

2.2. Co-ordination between the Commission and Member States

The co-ordination between the services of the Commission and Member States takes place almost entirely through the network of the nominated national correspondents, who meet several times a year in formal meetings of the Management Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture to give their opinion, and in informal meetings to exchange information.

The network of national correspondents is important for the implementation of the data collection framework. Bilateral contacts are frequent throughout the year and all national programmes, reports from the external experts and the STECF are available to all concerned to guarantee full transparency.

The implementation of the data Regulation framework has been a real challenge both for the Member States and the Commission. The experience with the Programmes for 2002, the only year for which technical and financial reports are available, demonstrated that the network of national correspondents has been effective. Their work has been successful in general, despite the fact that some Member States have underestimated the workload of these correspondents. This was mainly the case for the Member States where many partners (Oceanographic Institutes, Universities) are involved.

2.3. Roles of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture (ACFA) and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

2.3.1. STECF

From the beginning of the data collection programme, the STECF has been heavily involved in its implementation.

Over the period four meetings were held, to analyse the derogations and non-conformities of data collection programmes (March and December 2002), to analyse the catch per unit effort

(cpue) data collection within the national programmes from 2003 onward (March 2003), and to conduct the present review of the data collection regulation (July 2003).

Reports of these meetings were presented and discussed at the STECF plenary meetings and then, with some additional comments and considerations, endorsed by the STECF⁵.

2.3.2. ACFA

The ACFA was first informed about the data collection exercise in May 2001⁶ The Committee was updated on the current status and development during its meetings of 2002.

The ACFA welcomed the data collection programme and wished to be involved in the data collection process. The Committee accepted to participate actively in the collection of economic data on condition that the confidentiality of such data would be guaranteed by the Commission.

2.3.3. ICES

The scientific community in general and some international scientific bodies such as ICES have responded positively to the Community's data collection initiative. Data collected under the data collection framework are considered to be highly relevant to ICES work on assessing the state of fish stocks and to advise on management. ICES and the Commission have common interests in this field and ICES has subsequently created a Planning Group on Commercial Catch, Discards and Biological Sampling (PGCCDBS)⁷ which has met twice since the Regulation came into force. STECF Members and Commission officials participated in these two meetings.

⁵ STECF, 2002. Report of the STECF Sub-group on Research Need : Evaluation of National Programmes. Brussels, 4-7 March 2002. 46 p.
STECF, 2002. Report of the STECF Sub-group on Research Need : Analysis of Derogations and non-conformities of Data Collection Programmes for 2003 and further evaluation of Blackspot sea bream recovery plan. Brussels, 9-13 December, 69 p.
STECF, 2003. Report of the STECF Sub-group on Research Need : Analysis of CPUE Data Collection within National Programmes in 2003 and onward and their utility over the period 1995-2000. Brussels, 24 - 28 March, 51 p.
STECF, 2003. Report of the STECF Sub-group on Research Need : Mid-term Review. Brussels, 7 - 11 July, *in press*.
STECF, 2002. 14th Report of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for fisheries. Brussels, 22 - 26 April, 120 p.
STECF, 2002. 15th Report of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for fisheries. Brussels, 4 - 8 November, 140 p.
STECF, 2003. 16th Report of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for fisheries. Brussels, 31 March - 4 April, 84 p.
STECF, 2003. 17th Report of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for fisheries. Brussels, 3 - 7 November, *in press*

⁶ ACFA, 2001. Summary record of the meeting of the Working Group I (Resources) of the ACFA held on 4 May 2001 in Brussels. 9 p.

⁷ ICES, 2002. Report of the Planning Group on Commercial Catch, Discards and Biological Sampling (PGCCDBS). ICES CM 2002/ACFM: 07, 102 p.
ICES, 2003. Report of the Planning Group on Commercial Catch, Discards and Biological Sampling (PGCCDBS). ICES CM 2003/ACFM: 16, 38 p.

Furthermore, since the adoption of the data collection framework, several ICES Working Groups⁸ have provided spontaneous comments and suggestions on the data collection scheme. As end users of the data collected their inputs are very useful and a formal request to all ICES Working Groups to provide feedback on the quality of data provided will be made by the Commission.

3. THE DATA COLLECTED

The data collection Regulation provides two sets of data. Mandatory data collected under the control Regulations N°2090/1998⁹, N°2807/1983¹⁰, N°2847/1993¹¹ and N°104/2000¹² (e.g. fishing capacities, fishing effort and catches and effort) and other data not systematically collected in the past by all the Member States but necessary to evaluate the situation of the fishery resources and the fisheries sectors (e.g. discards, recreational fisheries, catch per unit of effort, surveys, length and age composition, biological parameters, economic data concerning the fleets and the processing industry).

The purpose of the framework, while including the first set of data within the Regulation, was to give the scientists access to these data for better analysis of the status of the stocks and knowledge of the fisheries.

For the second set of data, it was decided to maintain the usual scientific networks for being used by the traditional end users (e.g. ICES, ICCAT, NAFO, GFCM , etc.). During 2003, the data collected in 2002 under the data regulation framework have been used by the scientific working groups in charge of the stock assessments.

Analysis of the national programmes and their results for the 2002 exercise have shown that national programmes are generally consistent with the arrangements and the aims of the data collection Regulation to obtain more accurate data. All Member States have fulfilled the required obligations in establishing means to achieve the goals of the data collection framework.

1/ However, information has not been always provided on the methodologies used and only a few Member States have explained the statistical background of their sampling strategies and provided estimates of the level of precision achieved.

2/ Member States have in particular underestimated the difficulties and the costs of estimating discards. First experience suggests that the costs of the sampling strategies required to correctly estimate discards were higher than previously foreseen, especially because a fleet basis approach was generally used. Furthermore, as discards are generally estimated by on-board sampling, the lack of national legislation obliging the skippers of the vessels to accept

⁸ ICES, 2002. Report of the Working Group on the *Nephrops* stocks. ICES CM 2002/ACFM: 15, 246 p.

ICES, 2003. Report of the International Bottom Trawl Survey Working Group. ICES CM 2003/D: 05 , 79 p.

⁹ Commission Regulation (EC) No 2090/98 of 30 September 1998 concerning the fishing vessel register of the Community OJ L 266, 01.10.1998, p. 27.

¹⁰ Commission Regulation (EC) No 2807/83 of 22 September 1983 laying down detailed rules for recording information on Member States' catches of fish OJ L 276, 10.05.1983, p. 1.

¹¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 2847/1993 of 12 October 1993 establishing a control system applicable to the common fisheries policy OJ L 261, 20.10.1993, p. 1.

¹² Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000 of 17 December 1999 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products OJ L 17, 21.1.2000, p. 22.

scientists on-board introduced bias into the discard estimates. The sampling methodologies of the majority of the Member States deviated from the principles of random sampling when selecting vessels.

3/ At the start of the data collection Regulation recreational fisheries activity was considered to be small. With experience it appeared that their importance was greater than foreseen and more pilot studies were asked to be conducted by the Member States (e.g. on cod in the North Sea).

4/ The implementation of the Regulation confirmed the preponderance of the costs dedicated to surveys at sea within the overall budget of the data collection framework (see section 6 of the report). It should be kept in mind the high utility of these surveys, being the only way to obtain direct information from the fisheries (estimate of unbiased stocks abundance indices). Furthermore, these surveys gave information on the fish distribution over the time and changes in the ecosystem due to the fishing activities. Finally, they are used to sample biological material (gonads, otoliths, etc.) from the species caught.

Data regarding economics on fleet segments are included in the Minimum Programme of the data collection Regulation but the obligation to fully meet the provisions becomes effective only from January 2004. Most Member States have, however, tried to implement data collection programmes for some fleet segments. The collection of the data concerning the processing industry will become mandatory only in 2006.

4. DATA MANAGEMENT

The first set of data concerning inputs (fishing capacities and fishing efforts) is already being managed by the Commission through the control Regulation N°2807/83¹⁰ using FIDES 2 for communication purposes. For the second set of data (discards, recreational fisheries, catch per unit of effort, surveys, length and age composition, biological parameters, economic data concerning the fleets and the processing industry) it was decided to maintain during the implementation of the data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴ the usual scientific networks to transfer these data to the traditional end users (scientific bodies, regional fisheries organisations). This procedure resulted in the reinforcement of these networks.

In order to improve the current system, to facilitate access and to exchange information among Member States, between Member States and the Commission, and between Member States and the scientific end users (Regional Fisheries Organisations, Scientific bodies), an informatics' platform needs to be developed.

To define this common platform for the transmission of data under the data collection framework, a joint Working Group between the Commission, STECF members and invited experts was organised in April 2002. The Terms of Reference addressed the issue of the definition of databases and related systems to hold the required information, and to support access by the Commission and authorised representatives from other Member States.

The Working Group proposed a first stage analysis in which the specification of the system requirements and a proposal for a technical solution would be provided. This task was carried out by an external consultant during 2003. These results should be operative before the end of 2004.

Given that the communication system covers a wide range of data types and geographical areas, and in order to ensure that experience from these different fields is taken into account, a Support Group was established by the Commission. The main objective of this Support Group is to advise on system requirements, including the communication protocol, the database and the aggregation software.

Independently of the informatics' platform implementation, controls will be carried out by the Commission in 2004 to check the existence of the data in the Member States databases. These controls could be simple (random checks of data) or more elaborate (systematic control of the databases in selected Member States, or requests for data to assess the status of particular stocks or fisheries).

5. STUDIES AND PILOT PROJECTS

In order to bridge the period between the adoption of Council Regulation N°1543/2000² and the Commission implementation Regulation N°1639/2001⁴, the Commission organised a call for proposals, pursuant to Article 5 of the Council Decision N°439/2000³. This possibility allowed Member States to continue the data series collected under the former system and, at the same time, to prepare themselves to compile a thorough national programme of data gathering.

In response to the last call for proposals in 2000, twenty-three studies were financed during 2001. Most of these studies dealt with survey data, recreational fisheries, by-catches, and economic data.

Furthermore, Article 9 of Council Decision N°439/2000³ also provides for the possibility to finance studies covering well defined research needs. A total of seven studies have been completed covering different areas: inter-annual limitations for endangered stocks, application of control and surveillance systems, environmental and by-catch analysis.

Finally, during 2001 a total of 30 studies according to Articles 5 and 9 of the Council Decision N°439/2000 was carried out, for an amount of 11,3 M€.

6. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

In accordance with Council Decision N°439/2000³, Community financial assistance for the period 2000 to 2005 shall be 132 million Euro.

Member States submitted their national programmes for the first time during 2001, covering the year 2002, together with annual expenditure forecasts for the period January 2002 to December 2006. They had overcome severe difficulties in order to prepare and present the budgets. This was the result of lack of experience when presenting such integrated data collection programmes and because costs both for a new specific task (discards or economic data for example) and for the global programme to collect data were unknown for most of the Member States. As a consequence, the national programmes were mainly based on their limited experience as a partner in previous study projects carried out to collect data. This gave rise to serious problems, as for example, at the end of the first exercise some Member States had not spent the fifty percent of their total budget for 2002 and one Member State was, due to delays in internal procedures, not able to transfer the data collection budget to the research institutes.

One of the main achievements of the data collection programme has been to obtain for the first time an overall picture of the national programmes for all European Countries involved in the CFP with their associated costs (see tables 1 to 4).

The analysis of expenditure on data collection programmes established by the Member States for 2002 shows that they are closely related to the size of the national fleets or landings (main budgets are for UK, France, Spain and Italy). Surveys (about 45% of the Minimum Programme and 75% of the Extended) and discards (about 15% of the Minimum Programme) represent the main part of the budget. Where a programme on economic data was presented by a Member State the corresponding budget was small. The comparison of budgets devoted to economic data was not possible as only few of the Member States presented a programme in this field (see tables 1 to 4).

This first exercise has shown that the data collection framework is an excellent means of making data collection costs more transparent, so that all Member States and the Commission became aware of them. In the future, overlaps between national programmes could be reduced and public money could be used more effectively by task and area. Furthermore, greater transparency and comparability of costs should lead to greater efficiency.

7. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Having shown the relevance and necessity of the data collection framework, the priority should be now to improve it. This could be achieved by implementing measures to reinforce the existing system without requiring the collection of any new data or changing the Regulation N°1639/2001⁴ (see section 7.1 below) but it may also be appropriate to include some modifications in the short term to improve the system and take into account the scientific recommendations made by the STECF during its mid-term review (see section 7.2 below). In 2006, two events will occur at the same time: the budget revision for the six year period 2007-2012 (see Article 4(1) of Council Decision N°439/2000³) and based on the triennial report presented by the Commission, the possible amendments of Council Regulation N°1543/2000² and the Commission Regulation N°1639/2001⁴. This opportunity could be used to carry out more far-reaching modifications to the current data collection framework, concerning the overall balance of the budget by task and area and the type of data to be collected, with the possibility of including new ones if necessary (see section 7.3 below).

7.1. Reinforcement of the present Regulation (N°1639/2001⁴)

1/ Co-ordination within national programmes has been efficient when steering committees have been created to co-ordinate and manage them as in Denmark and the Netherlands for example. Such a committee or group should be established by each Member State.

2/ International co-operation should be improved. To achieve that, following the introduction of Regional Advisory Council's (RAC's), the regional approach would be the most appropriate. The main regions to be considered for data collection, taking into account the geography as well as to the distribution of RAC's, would be the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, Western Atlantic, the Mediterranean waters and others (which include the overseas areas). Regional co-ordination meetings should be carried out at least once a year with the participation of Commission officials to examine the implementation of the National Programmes on a regional context and to co-ordinate these programmes among the Member States.

3/ Greater transparency of methodologies is needed. To harmonize sampling strategies and facilitate the analysis of the results, any process of data collection will have to be described by the Member States in such a way that it is transparent. The procedures for calculation of the estimates extracted from the data will also have to be described by the Member States (indicating, for instance, how extrapolations are conducted, how, if necessary, missing data problems are solved or how various estimates are combined). Data obtained at the lowest level of disaggregation (for example by fleet) should be stored and sent if required.

When estimates are made, the elements which make it possible to appreciate the reliability of the estimates deducted from these samples will have to be provided (possible gaps between target population and population sampled, possible bias, variances, confidence intervals at 5%, and other thresholds). Even if the precision level is required for a total or an average on a number of fleets, the precision level obtained by fleet will need to be evaluated (cf. discards composition of the landings).

4/ The need to develop semi-aggregated databases. Previous experience on the use of the current data has pointed out a cut-off between the basic data at a minimum disaggregated level (which regularly poses confidentiality problems) and data so aggregated that they are of reduced usefulness for the scientists (e.g. total catch of the stock by a Member State). The implementation of the Recovery Plans for some stocks has thus strengthened the difficulty of having, in due time, catch and effort data within a sufficiently accurate stratification. There is therefore a significant demand for semi-aggregated data (for example synthesis concerning effort and catches by fleet and species, per statistical square and month). These semi-aggregated data would reduce considerably the confidentiality problems. This implementing process has to cover all the data (coming from the control Regulation and scientific surveys, even if the respective roles of the research structures and the administrations will have to be carefully defined). The aggregation levels will have to be fixed and the access rules will have to be defined after consultation with STECF.

5/ Finally, Workshops devoted to training in the basic techniques of sampling science and statistical processing (cf. validation), and Workshops devoted to analysing the results of the implementation of the data collection framework (e.g. comparisons of the various methods to estimate discards, estimate of the landings in the small scale fisheries -less than 12/10 metres- and recreational fisheries, etc.) should be conducted regularly.

Training courses on obtaining basic biological parameters such as age reading and maturity staging should be convened on a routine basis to maintain the level of knowledge and practice also as to train scientists in charge of the biologic sampling. Special workshops should be devoted to the estimation of such parameters when introducing new species.

7.2. Immediate improvements of the Regulation N°1639/2001⁴ (2004)

Based on the STECF recommendations made during the mid-term review of the data collection framework in July 2003⁵, the Commission intends to propose the following modifications, to the current data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴ in the early 2004:

1/ Precision levels of parameters should be defined in terms of goals to be reached. This could be applied only if all necessary elements for the calculation of the precision of the estimates are provided (exhaustive description of the sampling procedure and of the method of calculation of the estimations). For the case where the contributions of several Member States have to be added, a rule which distributes the charge equitably between them should be defined according, in particular, to the level of their catches. In some cases, if it appears

preferable to keep the sampling rate as goal to achieve, a clause which limits the risks of over sampling will have to be added to the data collection framework

2/ Discards from fisheries concerning stocks that are assessed using discards data, should be collected annually rather than tri-annually.

3/ Introduction of new species. Some deep-sea species, elasmobranch species and European eels species should be included in the data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴. ICES¹³ recently advised that some stocks are considered to be currently outside safe biological limits and in some cases a Recovery Plan has been recommended to be developed on an urgent basis. Moreover, Council Regulation N°2347/2002¹⁴ stated the obligation to sample the deep-sea species fished.

4/ Introduction of new surveys. Surveys devoted to deep-sea species, blue whiting and groundfish should be included. Unbiased abundance indices (e.g. disconnected from commercial fleet's information) need to be estimated and used for stocks assessments purposes. Furthermore there is a need to investigate the environmental effects of fishing on these deep-sea ecosystems which are known to be sensitive.

5/ Consequences of the implementation of Recovery Plans. Where the target stock is under a Recovery Plan sampling requirements for the Extended Programme should become mandatory under the Minimum Programme. The same is valid for surveys and recreational fisheries. These rules would only apply for the duration of the recovery plan.

6/ Commercial catch per unit effort (cpue) series. The Minimum Programmes should contain only data series for catches and effort for fleets which have been used at any time from 1995 onwards in stocks assessments, fisheries where there is no stock assessment but where cpue was the only way for the International Working Group to estimate trends in the abundance of stocks at any time from 1995 onwards, and fisheries where there are International Organisation requirements (Large Pelagic fisheries of ICCAT for example). The Extended Programmes should contain data series for catches and effort for fleets which have not been used in stock assessments but where stock assessments are expected to be conducted in the near future (e. g. Mediterranean waters, especially for demersal fisheries as hake, and for deep-sea species), fleets where data collection started in recent years until these data series are used in stock assessments, and fleets whose data series are only used for biological purposes (length and age composition).

Concerning the collection for biological parameters (maturity, growth, weight at age, etc.) it is considered that the limit of the scope of the data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴ needed to be better clarified to avoid overlapping with studies and research projects. As the final goal of the data collection framework is direct use of the data for stock assessments, it is considered that collecting biological data for methodological and technological developments should not be included and funded. The STECF will be asked to evaluate whether these proposals within national programmes (e.g. tagging, genetic analysis) should be eligible under the data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴ or under a research programme.

¹³ ICES, 2002. Report of the Working Group on biology and assessment of deep-sea fisheries, ICES CM 2002/ACFM : 16, 253 p.

ICES, 2002. Report of the Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes, ICES CM 2002/G: 8, 123 p.

ICES, 2003. Report of the ICES/EIFAC Working Group on Eels, ICES CM 2003/ACFM: 06, 87 p.

¹⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No2347/2002 of 16 December 2002 establishing specific access requirements and associated conditions applicable to fishing deep-sea stocks - OJ L 351, 28.12.2002, p. 6.

The data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴ will be applicable to the future Member States after enlargement. Seven new Member States are directly concerned by this Regulation, namely Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus. Scientists from the acceding Baltic countries have already been participating in ICES Working Groups to assess stocks and the ICES Planning Groups on Commercial Catch, Discards and Biological Sampling (PGCCDBS). They have been also involved in international projects for sampling catches in the Baltic Sea and estimating abundance indices from co-ordinated bottom surveys. For Mediterranean waters such international co-operation has just started (with the exception of the MEDITS project conducted since 1994).

7.3. Preparation of the future developments (2006)

Although the Commission will have to wait until the results of the next few years of implementation before drawing up its proposal, there are a number of issues which can already be identified as needing attention.

Other sampling strategies than those currently used for the surveys or for samplings at the fish market will have to be studied (including by better use of the market categories). Beyond these traditional classic studies it may be necessary to reconsider the overall balance of expenditure by large heading.

1/ Without aiming to standardise everything, limiting the disparity of methods to what the characteristics of the various situations really impose, will be the next step of the data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴. For that purpose, methodological exchange should be carried out between Member States. Workshops devoted to training in sampling science, statistical processing and data analysis will be a way to increase the harmonisation of approach.

2/ The disparity in the distribution of the sampling effort among areas and sections of the data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴ should be limited. It will be necessary to carry out comparative advantage analysis of the various sampling strategies used to obtain the same information with the same level of precision. Cost/precision relationships would be then established. The benefits induced by the possible changes in the sampling strategies would be analysed and, if relevant, the balance among the strata (area/section) should be modified. This will lead to a reduction in the overall cost of the data collection framework and a change in the distribution of the cost among sections.

3/ Furthermore, to avoid duplication of work, a clearer distribution of tasks between Member States should be undertaken (for example between Member States of the flag vessel and Member States where the landings take place, or between Member States which have similar fleets).

4/ In the ecosystem approach, analysis of the interactions between fisheries and the environment is a priority. This should include the environmental effects of fishing but also the interactions between different elements of the marine ecosystem on fisheries. Impact of fisheries on non target species such as benthic organisms and communities, marine mammals, seabirds as well as non target fishes need to be measured. Impact of fisheries on habitats, interaction between marine mammals and fisheries, interactions between aquaculture and the environment should be investigated. Long term effects on the marine ecosystems and

scenarios to restore the degraded marine habitats should also be analysed¹⁵. To achieve this, the data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴ should include the record of the key variables necessary to be measured, when defined by the results of on going study projects.

5/ Beyond all the uses of the data for traditional assessments a synthesis of all the uses of the data and of the materiel collected in the surveys should be made.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The results from the 2002 exercise demonstrated that Member States have invested considerable effort in the implementation of the data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴ and devoted much time into the preparation of their national programmes. At the same time it is evident that these programmes are highly variable in quality and completeness. For some Member States a significant effort is still needed to be applied in order to fulfil the entire Regulation requirements. It will take some time to achieve a systematic data collection programme with a good control of its quality.

National programmes are generally consistent with the arrangements and the aims of the data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴ to obtain more accurate data. Most Member States have maintained the previously existing sampling intensities for those stocks and species that are important to their national fishing industries and have developed sampling designs for others. Furthermore, estimates of discards have been extended to new stocks and new fisheries. This has ensured that most relevant fleets and fisheries are adequately covered for landing and discard estimates. Economic data concerning the fleet activity and, to a lesser extent, the processing industry, have been introduced for collection.

The implementation of the data collection framework has been welcomed by the scientific community in general and international scientific bodies such as ICES. During 2003, the data collected in 2002 have been used by the scientific working groups in charge of the stocks assessments, the usual scientific networks for the exchange of data having been maintained. The period covered by the first exercise was very short (in fact only one entire cycle has been carried out), so it is not yet possible for the Commission and the scientists to measure the impact of this data collection framework on the quality of the stock assessments and the scientific advice.

It can be concluded that Member States have in general fulfilled their obligations in establishing means to achieve the goals of the data collection framework. Therefore it can be considered that, with some exceptions, Member States have in general complied with Article 9 of Commission Regulation N°1639/2001⁴.

Among these Member States, most of them did not always provided the information on the methodologies they have used to collect the data and only a few of them have explained the statistical background of their sampling strategy and provided estimates of the level of precision achieved, as required by Article 3 of the data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴. Consequently, it has not been possible yet to measure the appropriateness of the methods used.

¹⁵ In reference to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Resolutions: Report on the World Summit on Sustainable Development Johannesburg, South Africa (26 August – 4 September 2002) Paragraphs 29, 30, 31. A/conf 199/20. United Nations. New York, 2002, 173 p.

Nevertheless, considerable progress has been made in a short period by the Member States in general and it can be concluded that the data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴ has demonstrated its relevance and necessity. The scientific community welcomed this new initiative and fully supported it. The data collection framework should therefore be continued.

The existing data collection framework system could be reinforced without requiring the collection of any new data, in particular by increasing the data quality control and the use of the data collected, and by introducing improved co-ordination at national and international level. To take into account the recommendations given by the STECF during its mid-term review meeting in July 2003⁵, however, some modifications should be made in the short term (e. g. precision level as a goal, introduction of new species and surveys, consequences of the implementation of Recovery Plans and considerations on commercial catch per unit effort).

It is appropriate to extend the range of data collected under this data collection Regulation to take into account these recommendations. This requires amending the existing Commission Regulation N° 1639/2001⁴.

This extension of scope and the implementation of the international co-ordination will raise the costs of the national Programmes. Moreover, the accession of new Member States will have consequences for the budget necessary to achieve the objectives of the data collection framework.

As a consequence, an increase of the budget of the data collection Regulation N°1639/2001⁴ for the year 2005 is required and will be subject of a proposal by the Commission.

9. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACFA:	Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture
ACFM:	Advisory Committee on Fishery Management
CFP:	Common Fisheries Policy
EIFAC:	European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission
FIDES:	Fisheries Information data Exchange System
GFCM:	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
ICCAT:	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
ICES:	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
MEDITS:	Mediterranean International Trawl Survey
NAFO:	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
PGCCGS:	ICES Planning Group on Commercial Catch, Discards and Biological Sampling
RAC:	Regional Advisory Council
STECF:	Scientific Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries
VMS:	Vessel Monitoring System

TABLE 1
Data Collection budget 2001-2003 (commitments)

	2001			2002			2003			Total		
	Number	Amount	%	Number	Amount	%	Number	Amount	%	Number	Amount	%
Operational Budget B2-904 B												
Studies (calls for proposals)	23	9.094.242	80,51 %	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	9.094.242	16,11 %
Studies (calls for tenders)	4	2.200.926	19,49 %	3	715.733	3,39 %	6*)	1.211.900	5,03 %	13	4.128.559	7,31 %
National Programme Belgium (BE)	0	-	0,00 %	1	381.550	1,81 %	1	500.125	2,08 %	2	881.675	1,56 %
National Programme Denmark (DK)	0	-	0,00 %	1	1.729.013	8,19 %	1	1.788.572	7,43 %	2	3.517.585	6,23 %
National Programme Germany(GE)	0	-	0,00 %	1	1.246.071	5,91 %	1	1.545.012	6,42 %	2	2.791.083	4,94 %
National Programme Greece (EL)	0	-	0,00 %	1	835.159	3,96 %	1	918.233	3,81 %	2	1.753.392	3,11 %
National Programme Spain (ES)	0	-	0,00 %	1	2.617.769	12,41 %	1	2.805.493	11,65 %	2	5.423.262	9,60 %
National Programme France (FR)	0	-	0,00 %	1	2.442.536	11,58 %	1	2.940.445	12,21 %	2	5.382.981	9,53 %
National Programme Ireland (IRL)	0	-	0,00 %	1	798.186	3,78 %	1	1.325.448	5,51 %	2	2.123.634	3,76 %
National Programm Italy (IT)	0	-	0,00 %	1	1.833.648	8,69 %	1	2.464.241	10,24 %	2	4.297.889	7,61 %
National Programme The Netherlands (NL)	0	-	0,00 %	1	1.233.469	5,85 %	1	1.384.993	5,75 %	2	2.618.462	4,64 %
National Programme Portugal (PT)	0	-	0,00 %	1	1.578.029	7,48 %	1	1.602.422	6,66 %	2	3.180.451	5,63 %
National Programme Finland (SU)	0	-	0,00 %	1	502.060	2,38 %	1	553.509	2,30 %	2	1.055.569	1,87 %
National Programme Sweden (SV)	0	-	0,00 %	1	1.170.515	5,55 %	1	1.015.498	4,22 %	2	2.186.013	3,87 %
National Programme United Kingdom (UK)	0	-	0,00 %	1	4.014.971	19,03 %	1	4.017.199	16,69 %	2	8.032.170	14,22 %
Total B2-904 B	27	11.295.168	100,00 %	16	21.098.709	100,00 %	13	24.073.090	100,00 %	62	56.466.967	100,00 %

*) studies planned, but not yet committed

TABLE 2
Maximum EU contribution 2002-2003 by Member States and tasks

	Capacity & Effort		Catches, Landings, Discards, Recr. & CPUE		Surveys		Biological Sampling		Economic data		Co-ordination tasks		Total	
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
MINIMUM PROGRAMME														
BE	50.100	15.750	52.750	56.018	46.400	29.404	232.301	248.954	-	15.540	-	134.461	381.551	500.125
DK	9.511	7.006	237.475	267.282	812.169	853.189	446.276	427.454	163.585	182.102	55.842	47.176	1.724.857	1.784.208
GE	15.608	5.122	4.046	86.561	759.706	846.594	338.323	489.190	71.057	43.467	57.331	74.078	1.246.071	1.545.012
GR	122.823	152.526	297.197	353.688	180.729	195.656	102.715	95.462	15.360	19.211	53.559	30.175	772.381	846.716
ES	-	-	284.822	537.725	1.224.168	1.127.270	821.012	914.466	-	51.425	287.768	174.608	2.617.769	2.805.493
FR	-	-	306.710	489.809	1.103.784	1.347.121	611.955	584.860	259.237	310.829	-	48.500	2.281.686	2.781.118
IRL	14.083	19.989	28.840	4.367	350.610	692.584	384.653	575.423	-	-	20.000	33.085	798.186	1.325.448
IT	291.145	272.770	190.716	308.482	490.000	540.467	352.104	429.930	311.453	313.137	198.230	256.260	1.833.648	2.121.045
NL	11.429	8.613	109.898	119.541	668.984	772.193	232.543	228.019	85.065	89.318	2.878	17.894	1.110.795	1.235.577
PT	233.558	155.677	149.504	248.286	221.873	284.015	633.756	610.931	78.821	69.545	260.518	233.970	1.578.029	1.602.422
FI	29.350	30.569	54.900	78.640	-	5.313	224.900	238.462	93.350	99.850	10.100	24.477	412.600	477.309
SE	6.715	4.055	2.015	164.102	545.566	465.407	444.820	255.609	48.084	42.359	47.715	49.478	1.094.914	981.010
UK	-	-	755.798	702.952	2.140.615	1.921.046	413.720	512.946	15.000	15.000	169.947	121.845	3.495.080	3.273.788
Total	784.321	672.075	2.474.669	3.417.450	8.544.603	9.080.256	5.239.076	5.611.703	1.141.011	1.251.781	1.163.885	1.246.005	19.347.564	21.279.270
EXTENDED PROGRAMME														
BE													-	-
DK									4.156	4.364			4.156	4.364
GE													-	-
GR					62.778	71.517							62.778	71.517
ES													-	-
FR					130.862	129.144	29.988	30.184					160.850	159.328
IRL													-	-
IT							343.196						-	343.196
NL			5.676	4.255	89.658	118.067	5.816	4.493	21.525	22.601			122.674	149.416
PT													-	-
FI			23.555	27.820			65.905	48.380					89.460	76.200
SE							67.186	26.302	8.415	8.187			75.601	34.488
UK			-	13.999	519.891	725.968					-	3.444	519.891	743.411
Total	-	-	29.231	46.075	803.189	1.387.891	168.895	109.358	34.095	35.152	-	3.444	1.035.411	1.581.920

BE : Belgium DK : Denmark GE : Germany GR : Greece ES : Spain FR : France IRL : Ireland IT : Italy NL : The Netherlands PT : Portugal FI : Finland SE : Sweden UK : United Kingdom

TABLE 3
Timetable on Data Collection Exercises

			BE	DK	GE	GR	ES	FR	IRL	IT	NL	PT	FI	SE	UK	
National Programme 2002	Transmission	MS	A first draft was received from all Member States by the end of May/June 01													
	Last modification	MS	After approval of the Commission Regulation on implementing rules, Member States submitted their final versions by September / Oktober 01													
	Evaluation reports	SGRN/Consult.	The external evaluation was finished by September 2002 (Consultants) and November 2002 (SGRN)													
	Financial Assistance Proposal	COM	The financial assistance proposals were sent to Member States by official letter dated 12. April 02													
	Negotiations until	MS / COM	-		May 02	Apr 02	May 02	Mar 02			May 02					Apr 02
	Draft Commission Decision	COM	The draft Commission decision was sent to Member States by official letter dated 24. June 02													
	Management Committee	COM / MS	During the management committee on 23. July 02 all Member States voted in favour, except Austria (non represented)													
	Internal Procedure	COM	The written procedure was launched on 24. July 02 and finished by approval of the Decision on 19. August 02													
	First instalment	COM	Payments were made in September 02, except for FR, IT and UK due to missing bank account information (payment in Oct/Nov 02)													
Technical Report 2002	Transmission	MS	First drafts as well as some final versions were received from all Member States by May/June 03, except UK (early July 03)													
	Suspension of approval	MS / COM	Almost all technical reports needed further clarification before approval (except BE), therefore emails were sent to MS in July 03.													
	Approval	COM	Jun 03	Aug 03	Jul 03		Nov 03			Sep 03	Sep 03	Sep 03	Sep 03	Sep 03		
Financial Report 2002	First transmission (draft)	MS	May 03	Jun 03	May 03	no cost claim for 2002	Jul 03	Sep 03	Nov 03	May 03	Jun 03	Jun 03	Jun 03	Aug 03	Nov 03	
	Financial report complete	MS	Sep 03	Jun 03	Jul 03		Jul 03	ongoing	ongoing	Jun 03	Jun 03	Jun 03	Jul 03	Sep 03	ongoing	
	Correspondence until	MS / COM	Sep 03	Oct 03	Jul 03		Sep 03			Sep 03	Oct 03	Sep 03	Sep 03	Sep 03		
	Approval	COM	Sep 03	Oct 03	Jul 03		Sep 03			Sep 03	Oct 03	Sep 03	Sep 03	Sep 03		
	Second instalment	COM	Sep 03	Oct 03	Jul 03		Nov 03			Oct 03	Oct 03	Oct 03	Sep 03	Oct 03		
National Programme 2003	Transmission	MS	A first draft was received from all Member States by the end of May 02, except ES and UK (Jun 02)													
	Last modification	MS	Dec 02	-	-	-	Nov 02	Nov 02	-	Jan 03	Nov 02	-	-	-	-	
	Evaluation reports	SGRN/Consult.	The evaluation of the national programmes by contracted external consultants and the SGRN was finished by December 01													
	Bilateral meetings	MS / COM	-	-	Feb 03	Feb 0	Feb 03	Feb 03	Jan 03	Feb 03	Feb 03	Jan 03	Geb 03	-	Jan 03	
	Negotiations until	MS / COM	Jan 03	Mar 03	Mar 03	Mar 03	Apr 03	Jul 03	Mar 03	Mar 03	Mar 03	Mar 03	Apr 03	Mar 03	Apr 03	
	Financial Assistance Proposal / Draft Commission Decision	COM	The financial assistance proposals as well as the draft Commission decision were sent to Member States by official letter dated 15. April 03													
	Management Committee	COM / MS	During the management committee on 25. June 03, all Member States voted in favour, except France (abstention)													
	Internal Procedure	COM	The written procedure was launched on 26. June 03 and finished by approval of the Decision on 23. July 03													
First instalment	COM	Payments for all Member States were made in August 02														
National Programme 2004	Transmission	MS	May 03		Sep 03	May 03	Jun 03	Jul 03	May 03		Jun 03	May 03	Jun 03	Jun 03	Jun 03	
	Modification	MS					Jul 03									
	Evaluation reports	SGRN/Consult.	The external evaluation is planned for September 2003 (Consultants) and November 2003 (SGRN)													

MS : Member State; COM : Commission; SGRN : Sug Group for Research Needs (STECF), Consult. : External Consultant

BE : Belgium DK : Denmark GE : Germany GR : Greece ES : Spain FR : France IRL : Irland IT : Italy NL : The Netherlands PT : Portugal FI : Finland SE : Sweden UK : United Kingdom

TABLE 4
Timetable on the submission of documents by Member States (until mid-January 2004)

	National Programmes						Annual Reports				Other Reports							
	2002		2003		2004		Technical 2002		Financial 2002		CPUE		Discards		Recreational Fisheries		Economic process Ind.	
	Due by	Submitted	Due by	Submitted	Due by	Submitted	Due by	Submitted	Due by	Submitted	Due by	Submitted	Due by	Submitted	Due by	Submitted	Due by	Submitted
BE	31.05.2001	30.05.01	31.05.2002	31.05.02	31.05.2003	28.05.03	31.05.2003	28.05.03	31.05.2003	01.09.03	31.12.2002	18.12.02	31.10.2003	24.11.03	31.10.2003	not required	31.10.2003	
DK		12.06.01		31.05.02		30.05.03		16.06.03		24.06.03		09.01.02		13.11.03		13.11.03		29.10.03
GE		14.06.01		31.05.02		28.05.03		28.05.03		28.05.03		17.12.03		31.10.03		31.10.03		31.10.03
GR		06.06.01		10.07.02		11.09.03		26.06.03				13.02.03						
ES		01.06.01		31.05.02		30.05.03		30.05.03		02.07.03		29.11.02		05.11.03		13.11.03		not required
FR		08.06.01		12.06.02		03.06.03		03.06.03		03.10.03		21.01.03		15.01.04		15.01.04		15.01.04
IRL		31.05.01		01.06.02		02.07.03		23.06.03		30.10.03		01.01.03		28.10.03		28.10.03		not required
IT		29.05.01		30.05.02		30.05.03		30.05.03		30.05.03		25.03.03		31.10.03		31.10.03		31.10.03
NL		15.06.01		30.05.02		30.05.03		31.05.03		31.05.03		05.03.03		31.10.03		31.10.03		not required
PT		01.06.01		30.05.02		09.06.03		09.06.03		10.06.03		13.01.03		29.11.03		29.11.03		04.12.03
FI		31.05.01		05.06.02		30.05.03		30.05.03		28.07.03		20.01.02		31.10.03		31.10.03		31.10.03
SE		06.06.01		01.06.02		05.06.03		18.06.03		18.06.03		29.01.03		29.10.03		29.10.03		29.10.03
UK	13.06.01	07.06.02	30.09.03	02.07.03	13.11.03	30.12.02	28.11.03	not required	13.11.03									

BE : Belgium DK : Denmark GE : Germany GR : Greece ES : Spain FR : France IRL : Ireland IT : Italy NL : The Netherlands PT : Portugal FI : Finland SE : Sweden UK : United Kingdom

report is missing 10.07.02 report submission far from the deadline (more than 2 months)