

**Report of the  
Regional Co-ordination Meeting  
for the North Sea and Eastern Arctic  
(RCM NS&EA)  
2011**

**FINAL VERSION**

**Johan Heinrich von Thunen Institute (vTI)  
Hamburg, Germany  
26/09/2011 – 30/09/2011**

*You cannot manage what you cannot measure*

*But*

*Some things that matter cannot be measured,  
And some things that are measured, do not matter*

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# 1 Introduction

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## ***General***

The RCM NS&EA 2011 was held in the Johan Heinrich von Thunen Institute (vTI) Hamburg, Germany from 26/09/2011 – 30/09/2011. The group addressed all terms of references listed in Annex 2. An element detrimental to the efficiency of the RCM addressing its terms of references was the unavailability of data from some Member States. This is addressed further in the report.

One of the objectives of the RCM is to agree on common references and naming convention. The group continues to recommend the setting of a RCM web page for positioning such references and with this view gathered and updated all agreements made previously, so that this report can act as a unique reference document. In terms of internal organisation, RCM NS&EA is of the opinion that no data manipulation should be done during the meeting. In this view, the regional database is seen as a major step toward a real coordination of the sampling programmes (section 4), and should be accompanied with a database containing the meta information on data (section 4).

RCM NS&EA is very pleased with the facilities offered by Johan Heinrich von Thunen Institute (vTI) Hamburg institute, and the availability of SharePoint offered by ICES proves to be very efficient in organising the work before, during and after the meeting.

## ***Background & legal requirements***

The EU Data Collection Framework (DCF; EC 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d – DCF EC no 199/2008) establishes a framework for the collection of economic, biological and transversal data by Member States (MS). It was intended that this framework would provide the basic data needed to evaluate the state of fishery resources and the fisheries sector.

To coordinate the work carried out under Member States' National Programme, 5 Regional Coordination Meetings (RCMs) are established covering the following areas:

- 1) the Baltic Sea (ICES areas III b-d),
- 2) the North Sea (ICES areas IIIa, IV and VIIId), the Eastern Arctic (ICES areas I and II), the ICES divisions Va, XII & XIV and the NAFO areas.
- 3) the North Atlantic (ICES areas V-X, excluding Va and VIIId),
- 4) the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea,
- 5) Long Distance fisheries : regions where fisheries are operated by Community vessels and managed by Regional Fisheries Management Organisation's (RFMO) to which the Community is contracting party or observer.

The regional split over 5 regions allows for coordination while taking into account regional aspects and specific problems. Regional Coordinating Meetings (RCMs) are held annually and involve National Correspondents and both biologists and economists from each MS involved in the DCF programme. The key objectives of the RCMs are to identify areas for standardisation, collaboration and co-operation between MS.

A Liaison Meeting (LM) between the chair of SGRN, the chairs of the different RCMs, the chair of the PGCCDBS, ICES and the Commission is being held annually to analyse the RCM reports in order to ensure overall co-ordination between the RCMs.

Within the DCF, the role of the RCMs and their tasks in regional co-ordination are clearly defined in various articles of the Council regulation (Annex 1)

## ***Terms of Reference***

While taking into account the above mentioned articles, the Regional Coordination Meetings in autumn 2011 are requested to:

1. Review progress in regional co-ordination since the 2010 RCM (follow-up of recommendations) and 7<sup>th</sup> Liaison Meeting report. Evaluate the outcomes of the 2011 RCM Long distance, in terms of complementarity and actions to be carried out by MS in the RCM region of competence.
2. Review feedback from data end users and benchmarks meetings.

3. Harmonise and coordinate the regional aspects in the NP proposals 2011 following the DCF framework, with particular emphasis on the following:
  - a) Economic variables
 

Fishing fleet (homogeneous clustering methodology at the level of supra region; homogeneous understanding of the definitions and protocols to achieve the goals; quality issues) in terms of:

    - Follow up of recommendations of Liaison Meeting,
    - Scope for regional coordination
    - Methodological report: experiences and applicability,
    - Consistency and comparison of economic variables,
    - Comparison of estimation methods for quality indicators,
  - b) Metier-related variables
    - Ranking system following regional harmonisation of the metiers at level 6, update of the 2010 regional view on fishing activities; creation of a regional ranking system to assess the Member States obligations and demands for derogation.
    - Landings - sampling agreement for landings abroad; discussion/agreement on concurrent sampling; agreement on merging of metiers for sampling; sampling intensities and data quality.
    - Discards - creation of a regional view of the discard sampling programmes, identification of gaps and discrepancies for optimising the spatial, time and metiers coverage. Complete the list of métiers important to sample and provide scientific justification for not sampling certain metiers for discards.
    - Recreational fisheries - review of the actions proposed in the NP proposals, identify whether there is scope for regionally co-ordinated actions.
  - c) Biological stock-related variables
    - sampling intensities and data quality; identification of stocks suitable for International age-length keys and task sharing for ageing; possibilities for extension to regional collection of data for maturity, sex-ratio and mean weights.
    - Coordinate biological sampling for stocks where the sum of MS having a share of quotas/landings less than 10%, altogether exceeds 25%. (exemption rule III.B2.5.1.(b) in Decision 2010/93/EU).
  - d) Transversal variables
    - common understanding of effort definitions, relation between biologists and economists in relation to data collection methodologies
4. Propose actions and where possible conclude regional agreements on the collection of data outlined under ToR 3.
5. Quality issues
  - Review progress on quality control, validation etc. in NP proposals.
  - Regional databases: agreement on a scenario and a precise roadmap based on the outcomes of the WS on strategies for Regional databases.
  - Review the outcomes of the COST hands-on workshop and recommend on the best practises for quality evaluation of the collected data
6. Review the DCF list of surveys (revision of Appendix IX of decision 2010/93/EU) – Compile information provided by MS according to templates agreed by SGRN-09-04.
7. Studies and pilot projects
8. Any other business

The initial agenda of the meeting is included in Annex 1. Note that ToR 3a&3d are in general dealt with within the first RCM of the year as the economists meet in that RCM at a supra-regional level. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the economists did not join the RCM meeting this year.

The structure of the report mainly follows the ToRs, starting at section 2. However, section 3 encompasses the ToRs3 & 4.

- Section 2 : ToR 1 & 2 and feedback from ICES and DG Mare
- Section 3 : ToR 3 & 4
- Section 4 : ToR 5
- Section 5 to 8 addresses ToR 6 to 8 respectively

## **Participants:**

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## 2 Review progress in regional co-ordination since the 2010 RCM (follow-up of recommendations) and 2010 Liaison Meeting report

### *Follow-up of 2010 RCM NS&EA and 2010 Liaison Meeting*

The recommendations from the 2010 RCMs have been considered by the Liaison Meeting.

The following review does not contain the 2010 recommendations given by the economists, as these were dealt with in the RCM Baltic. This section describes the follow-up of the recommended tasks and work.

<b>Métier variables: Tasks prior to the LM 2010</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	Based on the outcomes of RCM NA 2010 (first part), reference tables were provided to MS to inform on standardization of naming conventions. To extend these reference tables, RCM NS&EA recommends adding the métier level 6 by fishing ground.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Add information to the reference table and provide this table to participants and other RCMs for consideration.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Katja Ringdahl
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	31 May 2010
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	No inter sessional work before the RCMNS&EA2011 was done. An update of the reference tables and the naming convention is followed up by Katja Ringdahl; Sweden

<b>Métier variables: Harmonization of mesh size ranges</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2009 Recommendation</b>	In 2009, RCM NS&EA proposed mesh size ranges for towed and fixed gears by area. The proposed mesh size ranges for the NAFO area were not in line with the NAFO conservation measures. In 2010, RCM NS&EA proposed to bring the mesh size ranges in line with the NAFO measures and therefore recommends SGRN to take this correction into account in the guidelines for the NPs.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Update guidelines for NP
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	SGRN
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Prior to providing new guidelines in 2011
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	RCM NS&EA notes that the corrections of the mesh size ranges for NAFO area are in line now with the NAFO conservation measures.

<b>Métier variables: Allocation of French discard trips</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate sea-sampling effort to gillnets and trammelnets targeting demersal fish and to sample these métiers for discards
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	France to sample and to amend their National Programme
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	France
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	June 2010
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	RCMNS&EA notes that this is adjusted in the French NP and the allocation scheme was checked with Joël Vigneau

<b>Métier variables: Allocation of French discard trips</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate sea-sampling effort to OTB_DEF_100-119_0_0 and to sample this metier for discards
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	France to sample and to amend their National Programme
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	France
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	June 2010
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	RCMNS&EA notes that this is adjusted in the French NP and the allocation scheme was checked with Joël Vigneau

<b>Métier variables: Allocation of French discard trips</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate sea-sampling effort to OTB_DEF_70-99_0_0 and to sample this metier for discards
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	France to sample and to amend their National Programme
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	France
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	June 2010
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	RCMNS&EA notes that this is adjusted in the French NP and the allocation scheme was checked with Joël Vigneau

<b>Métier variables: RCM role and the revision of the DCF</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA strongly advises STECF and the Commission to consider the present situation with respect to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. defining a practical approach to the MS which deals with the present situation where most NP are not complying with the DCF;</li> <li>2. preparing interim guidelines to MS and RCM with regard to national and regional sampling priorities taking into account available resources;</li> <li>3. prepare timely for a revision of the Commission Decision while <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. ensuring the availability of statistically sound estimates to the scientific expert groups;</li> <li>b. taking into account that the ambitions of the Decision meet the limited resources of the Commission and MS;</li> <li>c. defining regional and national sampling priorities and the coordination role of the RCM;</li> <li>d. revising precision requirements based on scientific analyses of data</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Include a term of reference on quality issues (quantity vs. quality) and coordination tasks by RCM in the forthcoming SGRN meeting, including a roadmap for the revision of the Commission Decision
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	SGRN/DGMare
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	June/July 2011
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	The Commission informed participants that the consultation process for the DCF post-2013 will start in coming months and that issues raised by RCMs relating to problems with current framework and proposed improvements will be particularly important for this process

<b>Métier variables: Workshop on discard estimates</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA considers that, in a situation where sampling resources are limited, priority should be given to the sampling of discards in those métiers with high discarding. In order to be able to allocate and prioritize sampling effort to observer programmes at sea or self sampling programmes for estimating discards, preliminary information is required on discarding by métier where it is available. The information required is an estimate of the level of discarding (volume and percentage) and the main species contributing to the discard fraction of the catch.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	MS to prepare information on level of discarding in national métiers collected in recent years to be presented at a dedicated workshop to be defined
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	SGRN to plan a workshop MS to be prepared to provide information for the workshop
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	results to reported to RCM NS&EA in 2011
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	RCMNS&EA notes that specific workshop allocated to this topic, was not planned yet.

<b>Métier variables: Relation between data collectors and end users</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	WGCHAIRS to allocate sufficient time (half a day) during their next meeting in order to address the exact needs in terms of data collection and metiers requirements.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Develop a term of reference for the ICES WGCHAIRS
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	ICES ACOM, DG-MARE
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	September 1, 2010
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	RCMNS&EA notes that the relation between datacollectors and end users is improving (e.g. Data call WGMIX)

<b>Stock related variables: Inconsistencies in NP proposal tables</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendations</b>	In order to have correct reference list of species and stocks in Appendix VII 2010/93 and to avoid inconsistencies and errors in the tables filled in by MS in their NP proposals, the following is recommended: 1: Appendix VII 2010/93: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All MS should look for inconsistencies and errors and suggest on corrections this refers to naming of stock/area, species included and errors in sampling level</li> </ul> 2: Table III.E.1 NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Species list following reference list based on a corrected Appendix VII 2010/93</li> <li>▪ Area/Stock definition following reference list based on a corrected Appendix VII 2010/93</li> </ul> Table III.E.3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Species list following reference list based on a corrected Appendix VII 2010/93</li> <li>▪ Area/Stock definition following reference list based on a corrected Appendix VII 2010/93</li> </ul> 3: Establish a reference list of available data sources (survey, sea sampling, market sampling etc).
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	1. MS to suggest on corrections and put on RCM share point 2. Revision of the Guidelines and templates for future NP proposal 3. Establish a reference list
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	1. Maria Hansson Sweden to collate the updates and comments received from MS and to pass these to the Chair of SGRN. 2 & 3 To be considered by STECF-SGRN while updating the guidelines
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	1. Prior to September 30, 2010 2 & 3 To be considered in the next update of the guidelines
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	RCMNS&EA notes that MS have done corrections

<b>Stock variables: Studies on shared international age-length keys</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendations</b>	The RCM NS&EA recommends that a case study for deriving regional stock based age-length keys be carried out for cod in IV. This information is required to evaluate if it is appropriate to introduce task sharing, at stock level, with regard to sampling for ageing of fish.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Coordinating country to contact UK, Denmark and Sweden for supply of data and support in analysing the data.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Denmark (Marie Storr-Paulsen) to coordinate and produce working document. Denmark, UK and Sweden should send the sampling data to Marie Storr-Paulsen on request.
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	RCM NS&EA 2011
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	A study on the shared international age-length keys for mackerel was done by DK and Sweden and the results presented.

<b>Stock variables: Collection of biological data on IBTS</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendations</b>	RCM NS&EA to identify a list of species which should be sampled for maturity data during the quarter 3 IBTS.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	UK (Scotland) to contact coordinator of the IBTS Q3 to develop a sampling plan to incorporate species indicated in the maturity sampling overview.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Scotland (Ken Coull) to liaise directly with the coordinator of IBTS Q3 (Brian Harley, CEFAS)
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	July 2010
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	During 2011, contact with the coordinator of the quarter 3 IBTS confirmed that IBTSWG would be prepared to provide further sampling opportunities, where identified

<b>Stock variables: sampling for stocks where the sum of MS having a share of quotas/landings less than 10%, altogether exceeds 25%</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendations</b>	The RCM NS&EA recommends that relevant countries investigate the distribution of their landings from the named stocks in relation to the overall distribution across the stock area. Where they have no sampling plans for catches, they should consider if their component of the stock is adequately sampled, spatially and temporally by other MS.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Check if MS has catches in this RCM area and if MS has no sampling plans for catches, ensure that its component of the catch is adequately covered elsewhere. MS to report back to RCM NS&EA 2011.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Sweden, Portugal and Spain.
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	10 June 2010 for NP Revision
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	RCMNS&EA notes that there must be looked at agreements between the different MS

<b>Métier variables: COST 2</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA considers that given the fact that most likely, almost all Member States involved in the DCF will use COST for computing their precision levels for 2009 and prepare assessment working groups, resulting in a positive attitude of the EC towards the implementation of COST, a follow up of the COST project – COST 2- is required. The framework for the continuation of the project has several objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ avoiding the development of national versions of the tool</li> <li>▪ creating a functional help mailing list and expanding/enhancing the examples (taking into account the simulation outcomes).</li> <li>▪ correcting the possible bugs, improving the code, adapting to new versions of exporting (InterCatch)</li> <li>▪ Progressing on benchmarking the methods and simulating different sampling schemes and levels with COST</li> <li>▪ Make the tool user friendly</li> </ul>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	MS to start to implement COST
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	MS to be prepared to use COST
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	results to reported to EC and RCM NS&EA in 2011
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	RCM NS&EA notes that if the COST tool has to be used by the MS it is very important that the tool is further developed and maintained. The organization of workshops on a regular basis is also essential for successful use. This is further discussed in section 4

<b>Studies: Study Group on Discard Sampling</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA recommends establishing a Study Group on Discard Sampling. The main objective of the Study Group is to exchange expertise and experience in sampling techniques and cooperation with the industry.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	ICES to establish Study Group (probably under ACOM)
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	LM meeting to approve, ICES for follow up.
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	2011
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	RCMNS&EA notes that a study group (SGPIDS) has been established.

<b>AOB - WKEID Data needs and identification of key fisheries</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	The RCM NS &EA recommends that OTB_DEF_>=120_0_0 and TBB_DEF_70-99_0_0 are used as case studies for North Sea region in the ICES WKEID. The RCM NS &EA further recommend MS submit data to the ICES WKEID.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	WKEID to use the suggested metiers as case studies. Chairs to provide MS with the data format definition. MS to submit data
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Chairs WKEID, MS
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	early September 2010
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA Comments</b>	RCMNS&EA notes that WKEID tried to use several case studies, implement the COST tools and other quality tools. There were a lot of problems with the data not being in the requested format. This issue is discussed further in section 4

## ***Feedback from ICES & PGCCDBS***

### **2.1.1 Expert groups**

ICES presented the standard presentation of the current state of play with regards to data issues in expert groups extended with the latest comments from the ACOM meeting in Gdansk:

- i. Considering to organise data workshops as proposed by PGCCDBS (either in conjunction with benchmarks or on a regional basis), the RCM supports this very much as a place to get stock assessors and data collectors together.
- ii. Changing the emphasis from analytical assessments to a better use of all available data for advice purpose, even if the data are not sufficient for quantitative assessments (WKLIFE and WKFRAME3). This is considered important, see also under a).

The discussion of ICES recommendations addressed to the RCMNS&EA took quite a long time. During the discussion, the RCMNS&EA had several additional questions and remarks regarding some recommendations. This was forwarded to the chairs of the relevant groups that drafted the recommendations in order to be able to address the questions..

***A couple of points and conclusions:***

- a) List with type of assessment per stock for which advice is required.

Improving efficiency in data collection and data coordination would be helped if ICES can come up with a list of the type of assessment which is presently be used for each stock or is expected to be applied in the short term: age/length based, analytical/assessment, trends/survey trends/etc. Also an indication is asked which assessment techniques are likely to be used in the future for these stocks. This information can be used as an indication for the type of data needed and to prioritise the data collection. Note that decisions like this may include economic reasoning, so maybe input from clients/economists should also be sought.

- b) Data mapping for new stock/coordinators

WGEEL, WGCRAN and WGCEPH all asked generic questions to the effect of “we need to know what data are collected internationally: where can we find out who collects which data”?

Groups outside the normal assessment EG scheme (as well as some new stock coordinators) apparently have difficulty finding out who to ask for data.

In principle this information is available in the National Programmes and Annual Reports. However, these are not easy accessible. In the future, regional databases (Fishframe) could remedy this: reports from the database can be generated that indicate all that is available or will be collected. For now, these groups should contact the National Correspondents. They will be informed by the RCM that it is important to direct requests from ICES groups to the relevant data collectors.

***Recreational fisheries***

The RCM needs a process to collate current recreational fishing data and get feedback from assessment groups on the intensity of sampling required per species and region. In cases where recreational fisheries are considered marginal and not needed as part of stock assessment, the sampling could be kept to a minimal check list to track if there are no big changes. In cases where recreational fisheries could influence the stock, it is not clear what type/quality of data is needed. Contact with stock assessors is needed there.

***Comments from ICES expert groups***

The following table provides an overview specific comments by Expert groups addressed to the RCM).

<b>ICES Group</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>RCM NS&amp;EA comment</b>
HAWG	HAWG is concerned to learn that there is a strong likelihood that certain countries will lose their pelagic observer programmes in 2011. HAWG recommends that all efforts be made to maintain observer coverage across fleets that catch a substantial proportion of pelagic fish	RCN NS&EA questions why there is special concern. RCMNS&EA is not aware of specific problems in these fisheries. Observer programmes are implemented in the NP of a number of MS.
HAWG	HAWG recommends PGCCDBS to pay attention to the poor biological sampling of North Sea sprat catches. The sampling intensity should be increased in order to follow the	It is not clear what aspect is the underlying cause for the poor biological sampling: is it the quality of the data, the biological parameters or the coverage? RCM notes

ICES Group	Recommendation	RCM NS&EA comment
	sampling recommendations by the DCF.	that there is no assessment for sprat and that IBTS survey data are not used for providing advice.
PGCCDBS	PGCCDBS recommends RCMs should compile an overview of the cephalopod catch data available and WGCEPH participants should approach the relevant national laboratories. The issue relating to the survey data should be forwarded to IBTSWG.	RCM NS&EA doubts that this is an issue of regional coordination and suggests that this should be addressed by WGCEPH. All the sampling information is in the Annual Reports of the different member states. However RCM NS&EA agrees that there should be an overview and that the information should be more comprehensible for the end users. Draft ideas on how to set up a meta-database can perhaps be discussed by the SGRN.  --> recommendation towards evaluation of the TR
PGCCDBS	PGCCDBS recommends that roundnose grenadier effort data should be provided by all involved countries (ref. WKDEEP 2010).	RCM NS&EA notes that this should be addressed directly by the correspondent of each national lab.
PGCCDBS	PGCCDBS recommends that some exercises should be made to evaluate between observers (or for the same person) the quality of pre-anal fin length measurements for roundnose grenadier (ref. WKDEEP 2010).	This recommendation is not relevant to the RCM NS&EA. It is possible that the PGCCDBS organises a working group for quality issues on this subject.
PGCCDBS	PGCCDBS recommends that MS should ensure that, when collecting roundnose grenadier samples, hauling duration and fishing depth is recorded with all samples. Sampling should be spread across a number of trips rather than relying on large samples from fewer trips (ref. WKDEEP 2010).	RCM NS&EA notes that it is up to the member states to implement the coverage of the sampling.
PGCCDBS	PGCCDBS recommends to examine the possibility of a longline survey for large pelagic sharks. (in the absence of any fisheries-independent data) (ref. WGEF 2010).	RCM NS&EA is not able to comment on the proposed methods and usefulness (abundance, distribution, biological parameters) of a longline survey. It is up to WGEF to reflect on methodology as a longline survey seems not to be realistic.
PGCCDBS	PGCCDBS recommends that issues relating to the minimum sampling requirements for cephalopod biological data in the DCF should be considered at SGRN. PGCCDBS recommend this to be forwarded and resolved by SGRN in light of DCF requirements.	Needs to be addressed to SGRN, and not to the RCMNS&EA.

<b>ICES Group</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>RCM NS&amp;EA comment</b>
PGCCDBS	PGCCDBS recommends that the WGRAN request to increase and standardise sampling effort for bycatches (improve seasonal and spatial coverage) of brown shrimp fisheries should be taken up by SGRN to prioritise the allocation of sampling effort in the general context of the DCF. RCMs should look into the outcomes of SGRN.	RCM NS&EA will address the evaluation of the sampling intensity, whereas the SGPIDS will take up the standardisation.
PGCCDBS	PGCCDBS recommends to make better use of discard sampling in recording protected species bycatch occurrence in a range of other fisheries.	RCM NS&EA supports this recommendation but it is not clear what is understood by "other fisheries" and "protected species" (including mammals and birds?). Member states should include the protocol to monitor the bycatch of protected species in their monitoring programme. However, as the workload of the observers is increasing, monitoring of bycatch of protected species, cannot be the priority. SGPIDS has made an overview of the data that are collected by the member states and these can be used in the reporting of the bycatch of protected species.
PGCCDBS	PGCCDBS recommends an increase of the number of discard samples (% of trips covered by observers) on commercial vessels fishing fishing on greater forkbeard (ref. WKDEEP 2010).	RCM NS&EA agrees fully but notes that resources are limited and there are also other priorities.
PGCCDBS	PGCCDBS recommends intensified sampling of flounder in ICES Sub-area IV for age and biological parameters, especially of the landings (ref. WGNEW 2010).	RCM NS&EA notes that the advice of bycatch species can also be based on abundance and not necessarily on an age distribution. In this context, workshops will be established by ICES on the update of the advice rules and estimation of the exploitation rates for those stocks.
SGPIDS	For standardized discard sampling between countries/Member States it is fundamental that all countries/Member States are represented at the study group, or at least, all requested information by Member States is available to the group.	RCM NS&EA strongly supports this as a requirement for quality. Although fewer standard methods is the goal, one standard protocol will not be able cover all. Intercessional work need to be done if real progress is to be achieved.
SGPIDS	In pursuit of increased standardization, it is important that Member States summarize the main technical details of their discard sampling protocols in a common language (e.g. English) and make this available for other Member	RCM NS&EA supports this recommendation, as the same language is absolutely necessary for a good coordination.

ICES Group	Recommendation	RCM NS&EA comment
	States (e.g. published online).	
SGPIDS	It is recommended that greater attention is given to auxiliary variables, namely those that help to standardize fishing effort (e.g. grid device information) and reduce the variability of final fleet level estimates (e.g. post-stratification).	RCM NS&EA supports this recommendation and suggests to follow the outcome of the WKDRP (2007). It should be noted that this issue should be discussed prior to the meeting, which further reflects the importance of intercessional work .
WGANSA	WGANSA recommends that an otolith exchange and an age reading workshop for horse mackerel be carried out in 2012, in order to ensure an agreement of ageing criteria among readers and a good quality of the catch-at-age and abundance-at-age data. The otolith collection from the 1982 year-class, being kept by IMARES (the Netherlands) should be used during the workshop, given that it is the only otolith collection with validated ages.	RCM NS&EA notes that this recommendation should be considered by PGCCDBS.
WGNSSK	As last year, the WG still feels that there are large gaps between the data collections programs and the metier-based sampling discussed in DCF and RCM in the one hand, and the way this is used for raising catch data for WGNSSK in the other hand (for both landings and discards). There is still insufficient knowledge in the WG on how the data are raised before being provided to stock coordinators. Unsampling strata are still raised using age distributions from other countries without any considerations of the metier used. The WG strongly recommends better communication between the various data forums in order to consider whether these current raising procedures are still appropriate, and whether metier-based age information could be provided. In particular, the WG recommends that these issues are addressed during the first days of WGMIXFISH (30 August), and recommends therefore that data submitters (landings and discards) from North Sea countries attend this workshop.	RCM NS&EA notes that this is a general recommendation and thus not particular for the North Sea. There are two issues here. 1) large gaps in data collection and 2) insufficient information on applied raising procedures. The gaps are related to the immense number of metiers identified or requested. The RCM tries to ensure that the most important metiers are covered by sampling information. A description of raising procedures applied by the MS could be included in the data call from ICES to the countries providing data.
WGWIDE	North Sea horse mackerel: The provision of advice for the North Sea horse mackerel stock is hampered by the availability of a suitable abundance index. WGWIDE requests that 1) an evaluation of the suitability of North Sea IBTS in the third quarter as an index of abundance for horse mackerel is included in the IBTS group TORs.	Concerning point 1) RCM NS&EA agrees fully and suggests to ask Jeroen Kooij from CEFAS to check the existing data prior to the IBTSWG. Concerning point 2) RCM NS&EA is not in the position to comment whether such a survey would provide adequate information.

ICES Group	Recommendation	RCM NS&EA comment
	2) In addition, should current acoustic surveys not be able to provide adequate information on horse mackerel abundance in the North Sea? The possible implementation of an acoustic survey for horse mackerel in 3rd or 4th Quarter is recommended.	
WGEEL	problem on getting data and not aware of what is being collected and how the data collection are being coordinated – a WK in 2012	RCM NS&EA notes that this is not an issue of regional coordination and that WGEEL members should have his information themselves.

### 2.1.2 Benchmark workshops 2012 and 2013

The ICES representative presented the benchmark assessments planned for 2012 and a preliminary plan for 2013. Benchmarking is a technical review of the assessments to assure that these are based on all relevant data and that the underlying population model and estimation procedure reflects best science. In general, the ICES benchmark process aims for consensus among the scientists on how to assess a specific fish stock best, taking into account the level of knowledge on the population dynamics, available data and estimation procedure. It therefore is important that as well RCMs as the data collectors themselves are aware of these meetings, in order to make the needed preparations.

### *Feedback from Commission*

The Commission informed the participants of the RCMNS&EA, that the consultation process for the DCF post-2013 will start in coming months and that issues raised by RCMs relating to problems with current framework and proposed improvements will be particularly important for this process. MSs will be consulted through meetings of experts and National Correspondents, using partly meetings that are already scheduled (EWG Nov 2011, National Correspondents Meeting Dec 2011), if the agenda allows it and by dedicated meetings on this topic (first half of 2012).

### 3 Harmonise and coordinate the regional aspects in the NP proposals 2011 following the DCF Framework.

#### *Métier related variables*

##### 3.1.1 General issues

The main tasks for the RCMs are to identify where task sharing is beneficial and to facilitate the implementation of this task sharing. For the métier based sampling this process has been relatively slow and consequently the level of task sharing for métier-based sampling is rather low. There could be several reasons for this limited progress. One reason is the historical absence of formal acceptance of a regional database holding detailed catch data and transversal variables aggregated at a low level. This has resulted in large parts of the meeting time in former meetings being used to compile and harmonize data from the national programmes leaving only limited meeting time to discuss possibilities and requirements for task sharing. In 2011, following the recommendations from the RCM NS & EA 2010 and the recent improvement of the official status of FishFrame (ref. STECF), the situation has however improved. Most of the MS participating in the RCM NS & EA uploaded data to FishFrame prior to the 2011 meeting.

A pre requisite for task sharing of métier sampling or any regional work on the métier level is that MS have a common perception of the different métiers and that they allocate fishing trips to métiers in a similar way. There are of course differences in national fisheries as well as in the national data available to use as a basis for métier allocation (haul/trip level, gear information) meaning that MS never will do exactly the same. It is however important to document these differences in the case they have implications for future task sharing / regional sampling programmes/ understanding of the data. The main problem presently experienced by data handlers and where guidance is needed is however on how to allocate métiers in cases where the information in the official catch statistics is not complete (gear types/ mesh size missing etc.) or inconsistent (e.g. allowed mesh size in relation to species composition) as well as in cases where the métier is missing in the Commission Decision 2010/93/EU. The situation would probably be improved if data handlers from the different institutes could sit together to discuss problems and national solutions and come up with agreed guidelines on how to allocate such trips into métier. This could be included in the ToR on the agenda for the 2012 meeting but require that data handlers from all MS participate in the RCM.

<b>Metier and stock variables : Metier descriptions</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 Recommendation</b>	MS to fill update metier descriptions already compiled by RCM NS&EA 2010 and using the standard template complete descriptions for any new metiers identified. Updated and new files to be uploaded by Fishing Ground co-ordinators.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	All MS
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	RCM NS&EA 2012

### 3.1.2 Overview of the fishing activities and sampling programmes

#### North Sea and eastern Channel (ICES Sub-area IV and Division VIIId)

**Table 1 List of harmonised métiers (MS combined) cumulating 90% of the fishing activities, either by fishing effort or by total landings or by total value, in the North Sea and Eastern Channel**

	Ranked by			Sampled		Comments
	Effort	Landings	Value	At Sea	At Shore	
DRB_MOL_0_0_0	X	X	N/A	✓	✓	1
FPO_CRU_0_0_0	X	X	N/A	✓	✓	2
FPO_MOL_0_0_0	X		N/A		✓	3
GNS_DEF_90-99_0_0	X		N/A	✓	✓	4
GNS_DEF_100-119_0_0	X		N/A			
GNS_DEF_120-219_0_0	X		N/A			
GTR_DEF_90-99_0_0	X		N/A			
LHP_FIF_0_0_0	X		N/A		✓	5
LLS_DEF_0_0_0	X		N/A		✓	6
OTB_CRU_70-99_0_0	X	X	N/A	✓	✓	7
OTT_CRU_70-99_0_0	X		N/A			
OTB_DEF_<16_0_0	X	X	N/A		✓	8
OTM_DEF_<16_0_0		X	N/A			
OTB_DEF_16-31_0_0		X	N/A		✓	9
OTM_DEF_16-31_0_0		X	N/A			
OTB_DEF_>=120_0_0	X	X	N/A	✓	✓	10
PTB_DEF_>=120_0_0	X	X	N/A			
OTB_DEF_100-119_0_0	X	X	N/A	✓	✓	11
OTB_DEF_70-99_0_0	X	X	N/A	✓	✓	12
OTB_MOL_70-99_0_0	X		N/A			13
OTB_SPF_32-69_0_0		X	N/A	✓	✓	14
OTM_SPF_32-69_0_0	X	X	N/A			
PTM_SPF_32-69_0_0		X	N/A			
PS_SPF_0_0_0		X	N/A			
PTM_SPF_16-31_0_0		X	N/A		✓	15
OTM_SPF_16-31_0_0		X	N/A			
OTB_SPF_16-31_0_0		X	N/A			
SSC_DEF_>=120_0_0	X		N/A	✓	✓	16
TBB_CRU_16-31_0_0	X	X	N/A	✓	✓	17
TBB_DEF_70-99_0_0	X	X	N/A	✓	✓	18
HMD_MOL_0_0_0	X		N/A			19
MIS_MIS_0_0_0	X		N/A			20

From a total of about 150 métiers operating in the area, 31 métiers have been ranked as cumulating to 90% of the fishing activities at the level of the North Sea and Eastern Channel, i.e. ICES Sub-area IV and Division VIIId. Eight MS operate in this area, namely Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and UK.

France asked the RCM NS&EA for advice on allocation on French discard sampling effort. France have 300 observer days to allocate in the North Sea area and expressed a wish to sample the selected métiers with at least 24 trips/métier in order to achieve data of acceptable quality. The RCM provides advice in the form of recommendations, however, these recommendations are not to be seen as obligations as France remains solely responsible for fulfilling national targets, agreements and obligations as set by the DCF.

The métiers retained for sampling coordination at the regional level are the following:

1. DRB\_MOL\_0\_0\_0: Dredge targeting scallops, mainly in Div. VIIId. This métier is almost exclusively operated by France and UK. The métier will be sampled at sea and at shore. Discard rate of fish is small while it is high on juvenile scallops. The importance of discard estimates for management then comes down to survival rate of scallop discards which is out of the scope of DCF. The necessity of sampling this métier for discard was discussed during the RCM NS&EA. If the RCMs were given the task to prioritise métiers for discard sampling the DRB\_MOL\_0\_0\_0 would be a candidate for not sampling discards.
2. FPO\_CRU\_0\_0\_0: Coastal pot fishery targeting lobster and crabs. UK is the main contributor. The métier will be sampled at sea and at shore by the UK. The necessity of sampling this métier for discard was discussed during the RCM NS&EA. If the RCMs were given the task to prioritise métiers for discard sampling the FPO\_CRU\_0\_0\_0 would be a candidate for not sampling discards.
3. FPO\_MOL\_0\_0\_0: Coastal pot fishery for whelks and cuttlefish. Exclusively operated by France and UK. Discards assumed to be insignificant. Landings sampled at shore.
4. GNS\_DEF\_90-99\_0\_0\_0, GNS\_DEF\_100-119\_0\_0\_0, GTR\_DEF\_100-119\_0\_0\_0, & GTR\_DEF\_90-99\_0\_0\_0: Set gillnets and trammel nets for flatfish and gadoids. The different métiers of the set gillnets and trammel nets are difficult to distinguish. Different MS have further merged different mesh-size ranges and gear types differently. For the sake of the RCM NS&EA report all ranked nets targeting demersal fish have thereby been merged. The heterogeneity of the gear types and mesh-size ranges need to be taken into account when assigning number of samples to the métier. Denmark, France and UK are the principal contributors. Denmark, France and UK will sample the métier at shore while the Netherlands and UK sample the métier at sea. The RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate some of their available sampling effort to sample this métier for discards.

<b>Métier variables: Allocation of French discard trips</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate sea-sampling effort to gillnets and trammelnets targeting demersal fish and to sample these métiers for discards
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	France to sample and to amend their National Programme
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	France
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	June 2010

5. LHP\_FIF\_0\_0\_0: Hand and pole line fishery targeting a variety of species such as bass, cod, mackerel and pollack. UK and France are the main contributors. Discards assumed to be insignificant. Landings sampled at shore.
6. LLS\_DEF\_0\_0\_0: Longline fishery targeting hake, ling, cod, rays and skates. UK is the main contributor. Discards assumed to be insignificant. Landings sampled at shore.
7. OTB\_CRU\_70-99\_0\_0, OTT\_CRU\_70-99\_0\_0 and OTB\_MCD\_70-99\_0\_0: Trawl fisheries targeting Nephrops. Different MS have different naming conventions. It is further not always possible to distinguish between OTB and OTT. These different métiers are thereby merged for the purpose of this report. UK is the main contributor to this fishery but Denmark, Germany and Netherlands are also participating. The UK

have an extensive sampling programme that covers all trawls with mesh sizes 70-99 mm, whatever targeted species. The majority of the German landings are from FU 33 (Off Horn Reef). The Danish and German fisheries in FU 33 overlap and Germany have a bilateral agreement with Denmark concerning the sampling of this fishery. The Netherlands are sampling the fishery at shore.

8. OTB\_DEF\_<16\_0\_0 & OTM\_DEF\_<16\_0\_0: Trawl targeting sandeel. This métier is quasi exclusively operated by Denmark with Sweden, UK and Germany as minor contributors. It is an industrial fishery that does not discard and it is monitored for landings and by catches. Germany has planned to sample this metier at sea with 1 trip. Given the large sampling programme planned by Denmark, the RCM NS&EA suggests Germany to allocate this sampling effort to another metier.
9. OTB\_DEF\_16-31\_0\_0 & OTM\_DEF\_16-31: Trawl for reduction purpose. This métier is operated by Denmark exclusively, does not discard and is monitored for landings.
10. OTB\_DEF\_>=120\_0\_0 & OTM\_DEF\_>=120\_0\_0: Trawl for different kind of demersal fish in the northern North Sea. The metier is diverse in terms of target species etc. This need to be further investigated and should be taken into account when establishing sampling programmes and planning for task sharing. Three countries operate with this métier, namely UK, Denmark and Germany. The metier is sampled at sea and at shore.
11. OTB\_DEF\_100-119\_0\_0: Trawl for different kind of demersal fish in the North Sea. The metier is diverse in terms of target species etc. This need to be further investigated and should be taken into account when establishing sampling programmes and planning for task sharing. The main contributor in this metier is France but UK, Denmark and Germany are also involved. Denmark, France and UK will sample the metier at shore and Denmark and UK sample the metier at sea. The RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate some of their available sampling effort to sample this metier for discards.

<b>Métier variables: Allocation of French discard trips</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate sea-sampling effort to OTB_DEF_100-119_0_0 and to sample this metier for discards
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	France to sample and to amend their National Programme
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	France
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	June 2010

12. OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0: Trawl primarily targeting flatfishes. The metier is diverse in terms of target species etc. This need to be further investigated and should be taken into account when establishing sampling programmes and planning for task sharing. Recent changes in technical regulation have limited this metier in the northern North Sea. This metier is primarily operated by France but most MS are or have historically been involved in the fisheries. The metier will be sampled by Germany at sea and by Netherlands at shore. The RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate some of their available sampling effort to sample this metier for discards. See also comment 7 regarding sampling by UK.

<b>Métier variables: Allocation of French discard trips</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate sea-sampling effort to OTB_DEF_70-99_0_0 and to sample this metier for discards
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	France to sample and to amend their National Programme
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	France
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	June 2010

13. OTB\_MOL\_70-99\_0\_0: Seasonal trawling for cuttlefish, by France and UK, mainly in Eastern Channel. The RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate some of their available sampling effort to sample this metier for discards. See also comment 7 regarding sampling by UK.

<b>Métier variables: Allocation of French discard trips</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate sea-sampling effort to OTB_MOL_70-99_0_0 and to sample this metier for discards
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	France to sample and to amend their National Programme
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	France
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	June 2010

14. OTB\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0, OTM\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0, PTM\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0, PS\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0 and PS\_SPF\_0\_0\_0: Trawl and purse seine fisheries targeting small pelagics (primarily herring and mackerel) for human consumption. The main contributors are Denmark, UK, The Netherlands, Germany and France. The fisheries will be sampled at sea by Germany and UK and at shore by Denmark and UK.
15. OTM\_SPF\_16-31\_0\_0, OTB\_SPF\_16-31\_0\_0 & PTM\_SPF\_16-31\_0\_0: Trawl targeting small pelagics, mainly sprat, for reduction purpose, these métiers are almost exclusively operated by Denmark and are monitored for landings.
16. SSC\_DEF\_>120\_0\_0: Scottish and Danish seine targeting mixed demersal fish (mainly with mesh size  $\geq 120$  mm). This métier is operated by UK, Germany and Denmark and are monitored for both landings and discards.
17. TBB\_CRU\_16-31\_0\_0: Beam trawl targeting Crangon, operated mainly by UK, Germany, Netherlands and Denmark. This métier will be monitored at sea by all MS.
18. TBB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 & TBB\_MCD\_70-99\_0\_0: Beam trawls targeting flatfish. These metiers are operated by the Netherlands, Belgium, UK, France and Germany. The metier will be sampled at sea and at shore by the main contributors.
19. HMD\_MOL\_0\_0\_0: targeting mussels and cockles, which have limited by-catch of species
20. MIS\_MIS\_0\_0\_0: composing "left-over" metier

<b>RCM 2010 recommendations</b>	<b>Actions implemented by France</b>
RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate sea-sampling effort to gillnets and trammel nets targeting demersal fish and to sample these metiers for discards	40 trips of both types of nets, proportionally to their relative importance.
RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate sea-sampling effort to OTB_DEF_100-119_0_0 and to sample this metier for discards  RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate sea-sampling effort to OTB_DEF_70-99_0_0 and to sample this metier for discards  RCM NS&EA recommends France to allocate sea-sampling effort to OTB_MOL_70-99_0_0 and to sample this metier for discards	All trawling metiers have been merged, and 40 trips have been planned proportionally to the relative importance of each of metiers.
RCM NA 2010 recommends France to allocate precisely the sampling at-sea before SGRN June meeting, taking into considerations the recommendations given per fishing ground and metier in section 4.1.5	The sampling plan could not be ready by June, but is now translated into Table III.C.3 and III.C.4 respecting all the RCM recommendations by

	fishing ground and metier
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**Skagerrak and Kattegat (ICES Division IIIa)**

**Table 2 List of harmonised métiers (MS combined) cumulating 90% of the fishing activities, either by fishing effort or by total landings or by total value, in the Skagerrak and Kattegat**

Métiers	Métiers selected by regional ranking			Monitored		Comments
	2010			At shore	At sea	
	Effort	Landings	Value	Total	Total	
FPO_CRU_0_0_0	X		X		<input type="checkbox"/>	1
FYK_CAT_0_0_0	X				<input type="checkbox"/>	2
No Logbook	X	X				
GNS_DEF_100-119_0_0	X		X			3
GNS_DEF_120-219_0_0	X	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
GNS_DEF_90-99_0_0						3
GTR_DEF_120-219_0_0	X					3
GNS_SPF_50-69_0_0	X					4
LHP_FIF_0_0_0	X					5
OTB_CRU_32-69_0_0	X	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6
OTB_CRU_32-69_2_22	X		X		<input type="checkbox"/>	7
OTB_CRU_70-89_2_35	X		X		<input type="checkbox"/>	8
OTB_CRU_90-119_0_0	X	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9
OTT_CRU_90-119_0_0	X		X			9
OTB_CRU_90-119_1_120	X		X		<input type="checkbox"/>	9
OTT_CRU_90-119_1_120	X		X			9
OTB_CRU_>=120_0_0	X					9

OTB_DEF_<16_0_0						10
OTM_DEF_<16_0_0		X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		
OTB_DEF_90-119_0_0	X	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11
OTT_DEF_90-119_0_0	X					11
OTB_DEF_>=120_0_0	X	X	X			11
PTB_DEF_>=120_0_0		X	X			11
OTB_SPF_16-31_0_0		X				12
PTB_SPF_16-31_0_0		X				12
OTB_SPF_32-69_0_0		X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		13
PTB_SPF_32-69_0_0		X				13
OTM_SPF_16-31_0_0						14
PTM_SPF_16-31_0_0		X		<input type="checkbox"/>		
PS_SPF_16-31_0_0		X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		15
PS__SPF_ALL_0_0		X				15
PTM_SPF_32-69_0_0		X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		16
OTM_SPF_32-69_0_0		X	X			16
SDN_DEF_90-119_0_0	X	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17
SDN_DEF_>=120_0_0			X			17
TBB_DEF_90-119_0_0			X			18

33 métiers have been ranked among the top 90% for Skagerrak and Kattegat, i.e. ICES Division IIIa. Five countries operate in this area, namely Belgium, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands and Sweden; Denmark and Sweden being by far the major contributors in terms of effort, landings and total value. It is, however, suspected that some area-misreporting may occur, or some fishing activity occurs in the immediate border of Divisions IIIa and IVa.

Denmark is sampling the landings for human consumption by commercial categories. The assumption is that the length composition of a species in a commercial category is not dependent on the gear used. The RCM NS&EA recalls that this approximation is acceptable for stock sampling. The Danish landings data is based on census and - as given in the Danish National Programme for 2011-2013 - it has been demonstrated (ICES WKISCON) that the above assumption underlying the commercial category sampling strategy has already been proven on one case study. The industrial fisheries, known for not discarding, will be monitored for the landings by Denmark through a dedicated procedure.

The métiers retained for sampling coordination at the regional level are the following:

1. FPO\_CRU\_0\_0\_0: Pots on crustaceans. The major target species is *Nephrops* but to some extent crabs (*Cancer pagurus*) and lobsters (*Homarus gammarus*) are also targeted. This métier is quasi exclusively operated by Sweden, and will be monitored by on-board sampling.
2. FYK\_CAT\_0\_0\_0. Fyke nets targeting eels. Exclusively operated by Sweden, this métier will be monitored for the landings. Discarding is expected to be above 10% but high abundance of crabs eating the by-catch makes estimation of discards through sea-sampling programmes difficult. Survey data will provide a proxy for discards in the commercial fyke net fishery.
3. GNS\_DEF\_100-119\_0\_0 & GNS\_DEF\_120-219\_0\_0 & GNS\_90-99\_0\_0 & GTR\_DEF\_120-219\_0\_0: Fixed nets and trammel nets for flatfish and roundfish, depending on the season. Denmark and Sweden are contributing to the statistics. Denmark will monitor the landings through the commercial category sampling programme and Sweden will monitor these métiers through on-board sampling (self-sampling). The discard rates have been proven to be less than 10% of the catch in other regions.
4. GNS\_SPF\_50-69\_0\_0: Fixed nets for herring and mackerel. This métier has been picked up only for the effort (900 days) and is operated mainly by Sweden. The métier is operated by small vessels and the Swedish total landing in 2008 was 80 tonnes. Sweden has asked for a derogation to sample this métier.
5. LH\_FIF\_0\_0\_0: Hands and Pole Line for mackerel and cod. In 2007, the total annual landing was 85 tonnes. Discard rates are assumed to be below 10%. The métier was picked by the ranking system because of effort. Sweden has asked for derogation to sample this métier.
6. OTB\_CRU\_32-69\_0\_0: Trawl targeting *Pandalus*. This métier is operated by both Denmark and Sweden and will be monitored for the landings and the discards by both countries.
7. OTB\_CRU\_32-69\_2\_22: Trawl targeting *Pandalus*. This métier is operated only by Sweden and will be monitored for the landings and the discards.
8. OTB\_CRU\_70-89\_2\_35: Trawl with sorting grid targeting *Nephrops*. This métier is operated only by Sweden and will be monitored for the landings and the discards.
9. OTB\_CRU\_90-119\_0\_0 & OTT\_CRU\_90-119\_0\_0 & OTB\_CRU\_90-119\_1\_120 & OTT\_CRU\_90-119\_1\_120 & OTB\_CRU\_>=120\_0\_0: Trawling for *Nephrops*, operated and monitored by both Denmark and Sweden through on-board observation.
10. OTB\_DEF\_<16\_0\_0: Trawling for sand eel for reduction purpose. This métier is operated and monitored by Denmark for the landings.
11. OTB\_DEF\_90-119\_0\_0 & OTT\_DEF\_90-119\_0\_0 & OTB\_DEF\_>=120\_0\_0 & PTB\_DEF\_>=120\_0\_0: Trawling for different flatfishes and round fishes. It will be monitored by Denmark and Sweden through harbour and on-board sampling.
12. OTB\_SPF\_16-31\_0\_0 & PTB\_SPF\_16-31\_0\_0: Trawling mainly for sprat. These métiers are operated and monitored for landings by Denmark.
13. OTB\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0 & PTB\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0: Trawling predominantly for herring. Operated by Denmark and Sweden. The métiers will be monitored for landings through the Danish and Swedish sampling of unsorted landings. There is no sampling programme for discards, although this lack of information has been pointed out by the relevant ICES assessment working groups. Previous on-board sampling schemes have shown that the discard rate is below 10%. It is however unclear if this is due to low discarding in the métiers or due to low coverage of onboard sampling by observers, being an unsuitable method to sample discards in these métiers. In the pelagic fisheries (for consumption), discarding mainly occurs for market or quota reasons (wrong species or size composition). The choice to discard or not may be affected by having an observer onboard. Discard events may further be episodic and the amount discarded at one occasion could be substantial. This causes problems with distributions in data sets and subsequently serious raising problems. It is thereby doubtful that a sea-sampling programme will be a cost-effective way to obtain reliable information on discards in these métiers. Furthermore, it is known that

substantial area misreporting occurs where catches are taken in the North Sea and reported to be taken in the Skagerrak. The official figures shown in the NP proposals may therefore not reflect the reality.

14. OTM\_SPF\_16-31\_0\_0: Fishery very similar to OTB\_SPF\_16-31\_0\_0 & PTB\_SPF\_16-31\_0\_0 (12). All three fisheries might be merged in future sampling.
15. PS\_SPF\_0\_0\_0 & PS\_SPF\_ALL\_0\_0: Purse seine targeting predominantly herring and sprat. This métier is operated and monitored for the landings by both Denmark and Sweden. The Danish fishery is directed to herring. Area misreporting occurs where herring caught in the North Sea is reported as being caught in the Skagerrak. The same fleet operated in both areas, and if fishing activity takes place in the Skagerrak, it is sampled.
16. PTM\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0 & OTM\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0: Fishery very similar to OTB\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0 & PTB\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0 (13). All four fisheries might be merged in future sampling.
17. SDN\_DEF\_90-119\_0\_0 & SDN\_DEF\_>=120\_0\_0: Danish Seine targeting predominantly flatfish. This métier is mainly operated by Denmark and will be monitored by harbour and onboard sampling.
18. TBB\_DEF\_80-119\_0\_0: Beam trawlers targeting flatfish. This métier is operated mainly by Denmark, Belgium and The Netherlands. The fishery takes place at the border of IIIa and IVa and the fishery can be considered as a IVa fishery extending into IIIa. The Netherlands have a sampling programme for this métier in the North Sea, and these samples may be used by Denmark for this fishery.

### NAFO areas

**Table 3 List of harmonised métiers (MS combined) in NAFO areas**

	Ranked by			Monitored for		Comments
	Effort*	Landings*	Value*	Landings	Discards	
OTB_MDD_130-219_0_0	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	1
OTB_CRU_40-59_0_0	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	2
OTB_MDD_>=220_0_0	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	3

\* Ranking is not available, see text.

It was not possible to rank the métiers in the NAFO area, as some MS did not upload the data in FishFrame, nevertheless this exercise is not important in this area, since TACs are relatively stable from 2011 to 2012, except shrimp in Div. 3LN that show a significant decrease. Overall, the magnitude of fishing activities of the countries operating in these métiers has remained stable.

The métiers retained for sampling coordination at the regional level are the following:

1. OTB\_MDD\_130-219\_0\_0. The major target is groundfish species either if these species are deepwater fish or not. This métier is operated by in Spain, Estonia, Germany, Lithuania and Portugal in Divisions 3LMNO. The former métier OTB\_DEF\_130-279\_0\_0 exclusively operated by Germany in Subarea 1 (target: Greenland halibut) was merged with this métier, due to operation with the same kind of gear and mesh size. Probably Portugal will sample more trips than the program due to the good Div. 3M cod stock catch rates, but the number of days at sea will probably be the same. The Greenland cod fisheries within this metier in NAFO Subarea 1 by Germany is variable and will be sampled when occurring.
2. OTB\_CRU\_40-59\_0\_0. The major targets are shrimps. This métier is operated by Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania (no catches 2009-2011), and Spain in areas 3L and 3M. It is expected that the level of sampling will be less than the program due to the moratorium for the Div. 3M shrimp stock and the reduction of the

TAC for the Div. 3LNO shrimp stock. The use of selective devices (i.e. the need for re-naming this métier to OTB\_CRU\_40-59\_2\_19-22) should be checked by each involved MS.

- OTB\_MDD\_>=220\_0\_0 (previous code as OTB\_MDD\_220-280\_0\_0). The major targets are skates, with by-catch of groundfish species. This métier is operated by Spain and Lithuania in Div. 3NO. Portuguese and Estonian vessels occasionally change between OTB\_MDD\_130-219\_0\_0 (the most important métier) and therefore for Portugal this métier is not considered in the NP.

#### Iceland, Greenland and Irminger Sea (ICES Sub-areas XII, XIV and Division Va)

**Table 4 List of harmonised métiers (MS combined) in ICES Sub-areas XII, XIV and Division Va.**

	Ranked by			Monitored for		Comments
	Effort*	Landings*	Value*	Landings	Discards	
OTB_DWS_100-129_0_0	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	1
OTM_DEF_100-129_0_0	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	2
OTB_DEF_>=130_0_0	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	3
OTM_SPF_32-69_0_0	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓		4

\* Ranking is not available, see text.

It was not possible to rank the métiers in the Iceland-Greenland-Irminger Sea area due some MS's data missing in FishFrame, nevertheless this exercise is not important in this area, as the magnitude of fishing activities of the countries operating in these métiers has remained stable.

At present, in this fishing ground, a major fishery directed to pelagic redfish (*Sebastes mentella*) exists. This resource is wide-spread across ICES Sub-areas XII, XIV and Division Va and NAFO Divisions 1F, 2HJ and 3K. The existing mesh size conservation and enforcement measures are the same in the NAFO and NEAFC area (100 mm minimum mesh size).

Some métiers have been recoded especially those having the same mesh sizes and the same target species (pelagic redfish that was considered in different target assemblage, e.g. SPF or DEF, by different countries).

The métiers retained for sampling coordination at the regional level are the following:

- OTB\_DWS\_100-129\_0\_0. The major targets are grenadiers (*Coryphaenoides spp.*) and slickheads (*Alepocephalus spp.*), with by-catch of some other deepwater species. This métier is operated exclusively by Spain on Hatton Bank (ICES areas XII and VIb1). This métier is operating in the border of both RCM NA and RCM NS & EA and this should be taken in account knowing that about 50% of the fishery is carried out in ICES Sub-division VIb1.
- OTM\_DEF\_100-129\_0\_0. The major target is pelagic redfish (*Sebastes mentella*). This métier is operated by Spain, Lithuania, Latvia, Portugal and occasionally by Poland and Germany. This fishery is carried out in second quarter of the year in ICES areas Va, XIV, XII (northwest of area XII), moving to NAFO areas 1F and 2J in the third quarter. ICES advice is now given separately for shallow pelagic *S. mentella* and deep pelagic *S. mentella*. The shallow pelagic *S. mentella* management unit distribution includes the NAFO Subarea 1 and 2. NEAFC set a zero TAC for the shallow pelagic *S. mentella* management unit for 2011. It

is expected that the moratorium continues in 2012 for the shallow pelagic *S. mentella* and that the TAC for deep pelagic *S. mentella* decreases.

3. OTB\_DEF\_>=130\_0\_0. The major targets are demersal fish (cod, Greenland halibut) with some by-catch of deep-water species. This métier is operated off East Greenland by Germany, Poland and the UK. The RCM NS&EA agreed that sampling of this métier by Germany is sufficiently covering DCF requirements and that Poland and the UK do not have to sample this métier.
4. OTM\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0. This métier is operated mainly in VI to VIII, therefore falls under the remit of the RCM NA.

### **Eastern Arctic (ICES Sub-areas I and II)**

Some fisheries in the Eastern Arctic cover very large areas along the Norwegian shelf and in the Barents Sea (e.g. OTB\_DEF\_>=120\_0\_0) or Norwegian Sea and there is a risk that the same métiers include very distinct fishing patterns. MS should investigate if sub-stratification of the sampling is necessary in order to obtain correct estimates.

As the non-EU countries Norway and Russia are the major players in this area, the catches taken by vessels of EU MS do only constitute a minor part of the total catches. Consequently, all catches and sampling effort in this area should be considered when evaluating the MS fishing activities and sampling coverage. See section 2.1 on catch data from the ICES AFWG.

**Table 5 List of harmonised métiers (MS combined) in the Eastern Arctic**

	Ranked by			Monitored for		Comments
	Effort	Landings	Value	Landings	Discards	
OTM_SPF_32-69_0_0	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	1
OTB_DEF_>=120_0_0	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	2
OTM_DEF_100-119_0_0	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	3
OTB_CRU_32-69_0_0	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	4

1. OTM\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0: The UK merged this fishery with PTM\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0. Métier targeting primarily Atlanto-Scandian (Norwegian spring-spawning) herring. Métier operated in waters where discarding is banned. The métier is sampled by Denmark, Germany, UK(Scotland) and Ireland.
2. OTB\_DEF\_>=120\_0\_0 and PTB\_DEF\_>=120\_0\_0 are merged (same target species). This is cod fisheries with mesh sizes >130 mm and represents most important fishery in this area. Spain, Germany, Poland and Portugal operate in this seasonal fishery by few but long (several weeks) observer trips. Métier operated in Norwegian waters where discarding is banned.
3. OTM\_DEF\_100-119\_0\_0: This fishery (on pelagic redfish) will be sampled by Spain and Portugal. Lithuania will seek bilateral agreements with Spain or Portugal for sampling. Germany, Estonia and Poland occasionally operate in this métier.
4. OTB\_CRU\_32-69\_0\_0: Target species mainly northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*), operated by Portugal, UK, Estonia and Lithuania. According to the Lithuanian NP, one trip is planned. Métier operated in waters where discarding is banned. The minimum mesh size for shrimp in this area is 35mm and the Nordmore grid is also mandatory (NIPAG, 2010). As there are recent changes in the amount of landings, MS are requested to check the actual mesh size and selective device used in this fishery and include these details

into the updated metier descriptions in the Annex.OTB\_DEF\_100-119\_0\_0: This is mostly part of the saithe fishery in the northern North Sea (southern end of ICES Div. IIa). France has five vessels active in this métier and asked for derogation. The UK has a verbal agreement with Norway that Norway will provide sampling data they have collected from UK vessels fishing within Norwegian waters. UK has a bilateral agreement to cover landings with Germany. Métier operated in waters where discarding is banned.

5. PS\_SPF\_0\_0\_0: This fishery is ranked on a regional level, but is not sampled. This due to the harmonization and recoding of all PS\_SPF\_ALL\_0\_0 métiers into PS\_SPF\_0\_0\_0. This fishery is mainly operated by Denmark.

### 3.1.3 Metier description file naming convention.

In order to reduce the workload of both national coordinators when creating metier descriptions and that of the Fishing Ground coordinator at the international level when assigning files a standard naming convention should be used. This would give both all the information required when creating the file and ensure that the correct file can be allocated to the right Fishing Ground coordinator.

In each case the same information is needed:-

- Gear type – as detailed in agreed RCM list
- Target species group as detailed in agreed RCM list
- Mesh size band - as detailed in agreed RCM list
- Fishing ground - as detailed in agreed RCM list
- Country of fleet – Using DCF format
- Each item separated by ‘\_’

For example:

Denmark produces a fleet description for mid-water trawlers targeting small pelagics in area IV with mesh size and gear qualifiers.

The file name would be:-

OTM\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0\_IV\_DEN

Belgium produces a fleet description for beam trawling for demersal fish in IV with mesh size and gear qualifiers.

The file name would be:-

TTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0\_IV\_BEL

It was agreed that the description of the metiers ranked in 2011 should be updated based on the effort from the latest data available (2010 Technical Reports). Update of these descriptions could make use of mor recent data, but this does not change the ranking. These should all be available for RCM NA 2012. This work, for the fishing grounds covered by RCM NS&EA, should be coordinated by the Metier Description Coordinators given in Annex SW1 but also named below. The standard metier description template is given in Annex SW2 metier template (<https://groupnet.ices.dk/RCM2011/NSEA/Report%202011/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fRCM2011%2fNSEA%2fReport%202011%2fSub%2dgroup%5fmetiers&FolderCTID=&View=%7b0E18095A%2dADBD%2d4434%2d9957%2d27EB9F504EE3%7d>)

and a file naming convention in Annex SW3

(<https://groupnet.ices.dk/RCM2011/NSEA/Report%202011/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fRCM2011%2fNSEA%2fReport%202011%2fSub%2dgroup%5fmetiers&FolderCTID=&View=%7b0E18095A%2dADB%2d4434%2d9957%2d27EB9F504EE3%7d>)

#### Coordinator

- a) Ricardo Alpoim
- b) Christoph Stansky
- c) Sofie Nimmegeers
- d) Katja Ringdahl

#### Fishing Ground

- NAFO and XII, XIV and Va
- I, II
- IV, VIId
- IIIa

<b>Metier and stock variables : Metier descriptions</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 Recommendation</b>	MS to fill update metier descriptions already compiled by RCM NS&EA 2010 and using the standard template complete descriptions for any new metiers identified. Updated and new files to be uploaded by Fishing Ground co-ordinators.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	All MS
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	RCM NA 2012

#### 3.1.4 Regional agreements regarding landings abroad

There is a responsibility for all MS to perform sampling on landings within their own territory made by other MS' vessels (2010/93/EU). To enable the MS liable to perform the sampling, as well as making the best use of the collected data, bilateral agreements are preferably set up between the landing MS and the flag MS. These agreements include elements such as expected volume of landings into the landing MS and details on how the data should be collected, compiled and submitted to the flag MS. Such established agreements are done country by country in, on the basis of information gathered from the NP Proposals.

Presently in the Commission Decision 2010/93/EU, there is no threshold appointing how substantial the foreign landings need to be before the landing MS have an obligation to sample. In order to examine where foreign landings need to be sampled (and bilateral agreements set up), future (annual) analysis of all landing data uploaded into FishFrame needs to be carried out. This analysis could be done partly during the RCM NS&EA 2011 because not all countries had uploaded the relevant landings into FishFrame.

It was agreed in the RCM NS&EA 2011 that a threshold needs to be applied to sort out when MS have obligations to sample and consequently bilateral agreements should be set up, using the outcome of the RCM Baltic 2011 as a starting point.

<b>Métier related variables: Regional agreements on framework for the analysis of landings abroad</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 Recommendation</b>	<p>In order to identify were bilateral agreements on sampling of foreign landings have to be set up, the RCM NS&amp;EA agreed on a common understanding of thresholds for sampling. It was agreed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• should MS landings be less than 200 tonnes (incl. landings in MS) there should be no sampling requirement, this should not be applied to stocks where there is a low TAC</li> <li>• RCM should analyse the landings of MS and resolve sampling of landings abroad and obtain agreements at the RCM, if this is not possible a bilateral agreement should be implemented</li> <li>• that the analysis on sampling agreements are needed, should be done annually by the RCM using landing data from the previous year, if latest data are available</li> <li>• the agreement has to include how the sampled data are processed by the sampled MS before submitted to the flag MS</li> </ul>
<b>Followed actions needed</b>	Commission should be contacted for acceptance of this proposal
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	The Chair of the RCM NS&EA

Table 6: Total landings per flag country in different landing country

Region	North Sea and Eastern Arctic									
Fishing_Ground	(All)									
Species	(All)									
Sum of Landings_Tons	FlagCountry									
LandingCountry	BEL	DEU	DNK	EST	GBR	IRL	LTU	NLD	SWE	Total
BEL	12202	4	1		11			282		12501
DEU	32	27346	18759		8200			1372	2152	57862
DNK	15	29593	541862		10180	9		3033	45884	630574
ENG			279					402	3112	3793
ESP		82			336					419
FRA	55				1244	457		1294		3050
FRO			7063		2832					9895
GBR	100	90			193371	3647		9		197217
IRL		1			57	5456				5514
ISL		4132		1229						5361
LTU							3578			3578
NLD	3306	14996	975		31691	1493		97097		149558
NOR			47539	5270	29683	5126			120	87739
SCO			15433					10		15442
SWE			3416						22554	25970
Total	15710	76245	635329	6499	277604	16188	3578	103498	73822	1208473

Table 6 shows the 2010 landings of a flag country in the various MS. This pivot table is available on the share point and can be evaluated by MS, fishing ground and species.

If the analysis of the data identifies the need for a bilateral agreement it has to include how the samples have to be taken and the data processed by the landing (sampling) country before they are submitted to the flag country.

### 3.1.5 Concurrent sampling.

After 2 years of implementation of the new DCF, it is clear that those MS that undertake concurrent sampling of landings do so in different ways. The guidance given in Commission Decision 93/2009 on how to implement concurrent sampling is not clear and very open as to interpretation. As a result of this those MS that do attempt concurrent sampling have implemented protocols to ensure sampling can be undertaken within the constraints of landing and market practises within each MS that cannot be easily compared. With more vessels packing their catches at sea it has become more difficult to sample the catch at the point of landing. The time window from the time of landing until the landing is sold and transported to processing industry plants or retailers does not always allow sufficient time for full concurrent sampling to be undertaken unless the whole or a sub-sample of the landing is bought. This will have a high economic cost to the programme and is therefore not an option. The RCM NS&EA fully supports the objectives of obtaining a representative catch composition of the landings, however the present concurrent sampling programmes are not necessarily the most cost effective and appropriate method of obtaining this. This RCM is of the opinion that there already exist many other sampling methods that enable the collection of the information on landings composition that are more cost effective to implement. The MS present also felt that there was no clear explanation of how the data collected from concurrent sampling would be used in the assessment process.

<b>Metier and stock variables: Concurrent sampling</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA is of the opinion that the sampling methods for obtaining catch compositions be reviewed before the implementation of the new DCF.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	SGRN / Commission
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	SGRN / Commission
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	To be included in the new Regulation of the DCF

### 3.1.6 Discards

The creation of a regional view of the discard sampling programmes, identification of gaps and discrepancies for optimising the spatial, time and metiers coverage. Complete the list of métiers important to sample and provide scientific justification for not sampling certain metiers for discards.

#### **Request for not sampling for discards at sea in FPO\_MOL\_0\_0\_0 in IV, VIId**

The UK(E) submitted an 2009/10 Fisheries Science Report on Whelk (*Busycon* spp) Biology in order to seek support in removing the requirement for sampling at sea for the FPO\_MOL\_0\_0\_0 metier. The report was discussed by RCM NS&EA and it was agreed that as there is limited discarding of non- finfish species and all the discarded molluscs a returned alive there was no need for at sea sampling for this metier. This information has been added to the summary of all exemptions from at sea sampling agreed at RCM NS&EA. The FSP report can be found on:

<https://groupnet.ices.dk/RCM2011/NSEA/Report%202011/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fRCM2011%2fNS EA%2fReport%202011%2fSub%2dgroup%5fmetiers%2fAnnex&FolderCTID=&View=%7b0E18095A%2dADBD%2d4434%2d9957%2d27EB9F504EE3%7d>.

Table 7: Summary of agreements reached during RCM NS&EA on the need to sample metiers on-board for discards estimation .

Metier	Area	RCM NS&EA Comment	Sampling required	RCM NS&EA report
Sampling of metiers that only catch G3 species	All	Recommends that SGRN clarifies if metiers only catching G3 species need to be sampled. SGRN: these metiers have to be sample. In case MS disagree with this decision, MS should take this up in bilaterally with the Commission.	Yes	2009 (p 9)
DRB_MOL_0_0_0	VIIId, IV	Discard rate of fish is small while it is high on juvenile scallops. The importance of discard estimates for management then comes down to survival rate of scallop discards which is out of the scope of DCF. The necessity of sampling this metier for discard was discussed during the RCM NS&EA. If the RCMs were given the task to prioritise metiers for discard sampling the DRB_MOL_0_0_0 would be a candidate for not sampling discards.	?	2010 (p 20)
FPO_CRU_0_0_0	VIIId, IV	The necessity of sampling this metier for discard was discussed during the RCM NS&EA. If the RCMs were given the task to prioritise metiers for discard sampling the FPO_CRU_0_0_0 would be a candidate for not sampling discards.	?	2010 (p 21)
FPO_MOL_0_0_0	VIIId, IV	Coastal pot fishery for whelks and cuttlefish. Exclusively operated by France and UK. Discards assumed to be insignificant. Landings sampled at shore. + see Fisheries Science Report on Whelk submitted by the UK(E) in 2009/10.	?	2010 (p 21)
LHP_FIF_0_0_0	VIIId, IV	Discards assumed to be insignificant. Landings sampled at shore.	?	2010 (p 21)
LLS_DEF_0_0_0	VIIId, IV	Discards assumed to be insignificant. Landings sampled at shore.	?	2010 (p 21)
OTB_DEF_<16_0_0	VIIId, IV	It is an industrial fishery that does not discard and it is monitored for landings and by catches. Germany has planned to sample this metier at sea with 1 trip. Given the large sampling programme planned by Denmark, the RCM NS&EA suggests Germany to allocate this sampling effort to another metier.	?	2010 (p 21)
OTB_DEF_16 31_0_0	VIIId, IV	Trawl for reduction purpose. This métier is operated by Denmark exclusively, does not discard and is monitored for landings.	?	2010 (p 21)
LH_FIF_0_0_0	IIIa	Sweden has asked for derogation to sample this métier.	?	2010 (p 27)

### 3.1.7 Regional view of the discard sampling programme (better to say catches at sea sampling programme)

In the feed back from expert groups, often request are addressed to the RCMs in order to record data. Often the expert group is not aware of what is already recorder during catches at sea sampling, or what is not.

Example:

*WGBYC would like to know which of these species / groups are being recorded and when that recording started and if they are not being recorded, can they be .... Please!*

Therefore, in the Annex Regional View of the discard sampling programme, an overview is given of what is recorded during catches at sea programs of the difeerent MS (RegionalViewObservationsAtSea[AT] <https://groupnet.ices.dk/RCM2011/NSEA/Report%202011/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fRCM2011%2fNS EA%2fReport%202011%2fSub%2dgroup%5fmetiers&FolderCTID=&View=%7b0E18095A%2dADBD%2d4434%2d9957%2d27EB9F504EE3%7d>)

## Stock-related variables

### 3.2.1 Sampling intensities and quality

An overview of planned sampling for age, sex, maturity and weight are presented in Annexes X1-X4 <https://groupnet.ices.dk/RCM2011/NSEA/Report%202011/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fRCM2011%2fNS EA%2fReport%202011%2fSub%2dgroup%5fstocks&FolderCTID=&View=%7b0E18095A%2dADBD%2d4434%2d9957%2d27EB9F504EE3%7d>)

and are based on table III.E.3 from those updated MS National Programmes 2011-2013, that were available to the RCM. No proper analyses have been undertaken to evaluate the relevance of current sampling level or to suggest appropriate sampling levels on a regional scale. A number of issues were identified when considering sampling intensity.

- a. Data Collection – Member states sampling schemes are in a state of flux. With recommendations from WKPRECISE and the changes coming in the new DCF, optimising sampling schemes is not straightforward. Issues include;
  - i. How many samples need to be aged to achieve a reasonable precision?
  - ii. Although the precision is high, is bias in the sampling program taking into account?
  - iii. Is there over/under sampling and will this changes if MS are merging data?
  - iv. Stock parameters need better identification.
  - v. Collecting maturity data at the wrong time is wasteful in resources. Note needs to be made of sampling maturity within the recommended period (linked to section 3.2.3)
- b. Age Reading
  - i. Expertise (see section 3.2.2)
- c. ALK combination (see section 4.2.4 for text on quality)
  - i. Small scale ALK versus pooled international ALKs
  - ii. Is there bias if you use a selected sample for the ALK due to limited area collected (e.g. issues at this time in North Sea sprat)?
  - iii. Looking to the future if task sharing occurs there needs to be processes in place to ensure that bias does not ‘creep’ in when reducing/increasing sampling levels.

### 3.2.2 Task sharing – age reading

The RCM NS&EA discussed how task-sharing in terms of age determination and quality improvement could be organised. At present, only limited coordination and bilateral agreements have been put into place.

When new species have to be dealt with, it becomes costly for the individual institutes to train personnel for age reading of possibly rather small volumes of age samples from these species. Therefore, RCM NS&EA discussed the advantages of having one or two leading member states that would process the age samples from these species for all countries that are obliged to collect age samples. The suggestion on leading MS should be based on expertise, quality in age reading in connection with the level of the MS landings.

To ensure the quality of the age readings, two member states or at least two persons from the leading age reading institution should share the age reading of a species in the same region. A protocol for regular cross readings is needed and has been dealt within WKNARC in September 2011. New methods and techniques could easily be adopted, i.e. when only few institutes are being involved.

Even when the majority of institutes have no expertise in a particular species or stock, it is not always necessary to organise task sharing schemes.

Table 8. below (extracted from Annex X1

<https://groupnet.ices.dk/RCM2011/NSEA/Report%202011/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fRCM2011%2fNS EA%2fReport%202011%2fSub%2dgroup%5fstocks&FolderCTID=&View=%7b0E18095A%2dADB%2d4434%2d9957%2d27EB9F504EE3%7d>)

identifies only those stocks that are suitable for task sharing and this RCM recommends that these be investigated further by the participating MS.

<b>Stock variables: investigate opportunities for task sharing age reading</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 Recommendations</b>	The RCM NS&EA recommends that the task sharing species are investigating by MS participating in current age reading programs and decide whether task sharing is desirable or possible for the future.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	MS to investigate each task sharing opportunity with specific MS taking responsibility for each species and report for the chair of RCM NS&EA
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Each MS noted in column labelled “Leading countries” to liaise with MS without expertise for that species.
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	1 December 2011

It was agreed that there were several instances where a large number of ages are to be taken but until such time as there are tools in place to provide detailed analyses on optimum sampling levels, both spatially and temporally, it would not be advisable to embark on reducing these numbers. This relates mainly to G1 species. In order to advance this concept to the main species (G1), it was clear that there was a need to carry out exploratory studies on implications of using shared international age-length keys. Denmark carried out such a study using the North Sea cod as an example and this was presented during the 2011 RCM.





“MS are requested to upload 2010 national landings and effort data at DCF level 6 data into FishFrame before August 19, 2011. The aim of this data call is twofold:

- To gain experience in uploading data to FishFrame and to discuss these experiences at the RCM’s
- To facilitate trial analyses for regional sampling strategies at the upcoming RCM’s.

Please upload the data into FishFrame prior to the deadline. The FishFrame format specifications, upload facilities and contact details are available at [www.fishframe.org](http://www.fishframe.org). You can request a password for the website through the contact form available.”

Tables were constructed with the data uploaded to FishFrame or brought to the meeting in another format. Stocks with very small landings in all MS were identified and stocks were MS had above 200 t landings but less than 10% of the total landings were identified for the area IIIa, IV and VIIb, and I and II. Area XIV were not included as some of the main MS in this area did not provide data.

With the data available, no stocks were identified where member states had landings less than 10% and altogether exceeding 25% of the total EU landings in 2010. However, some stocks were identified with total landings less than 200t, and therefore these stocks do not require sampling by Member States (Annex X6-X8 <https://groupnet.ices.dk/RCM2011/NSEA/Report%202011/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fRCM2011%2fNS&EA%2fReport%202011%2fSub%2dgroup%5fstocks&FolderCTID=&View=%7b0E18095A%2dADB%2d4434%2d9957%2d27EB9F504EE3%7d>).

## ***Overview of sampling recreational fisheries***

Commission Decision 93/2010 requires Member States to estimate quarterly catches of recreational fisheries targeting cod, sharks and eel (the latter in marine and inland waters) in waters under the remit of RCM NS & EA. Additionally, Council Regulation (EC) No. 1224/2009 (Article 55) includes the requirement for estimation of recreational fishery catches of recovery plan species.

For most countries, sampling of recreational fisheries is a quite new activity. In a number of cases, pilot studies have been carried out in the past, but in many institutes there is no expertise in sampling these types of fisheries. Therefore, the Workshop on Sampling Methods for Recreational Fisheries (WKSMRF) was held in April 2009, and attended by representatives from most of the RCM NS&EA Member States. The report of WKSMRF gives an extensive summary of the national recreational fisheries and lists recommendations for recreational fisheries in the Atlantic area, including the recommendations to collect data at the scale of stock units when recreational fisheries data are to be used for stock assessments, and to set up an ICES planning group on recreational fisheries.

The ICES Planning group on RF Sampling (PGRFS) met for the first time in June 2010 in Norway (Bergen) and again in 2011 (Spain, Palma Majorca). Only the 2010 report was available to RCM-NS&EA. RCM reviewed outcomes of this meeting. Harmonization of the sampling of recreational fisheries was among PGRFS objectives.

It is apparent that PGRFS has made progress in reviewing which methods can be used for monitoring and assessment of recreational fisheries providing guidance in their benefits or deficiencies, clarifying concepts and definitions around RF, harmonizing reporting by countries under a common format to describe RF, and developing recommendations for common methodological approaches for surveying RF that could be developed through international collaboration and between all RCMs.

It is apparent that most MS and Norway who are represented at RCM NS&EA have taken into account these meetings and reports in order to implement and refine their RF sampling plans.

Currently there is no clear understanding how these data will subsequently be used either for economic or assessment purposes. Clear guidelines are needed on the data parameter requirements for collection and data needs of the end users. There needs to be a process to collate current recreational fishing data and get feedback from assessment groups on the intensity of sampling required per species and region. In cases where recreational fisheries for a species are considered marginal and not needed as part of stock assessment, the sampling could be kept to a minimal check list to track changes in catch rates. In cases where recreational fisheries could influence the stock assessment a clear list of the required data for assessment purposes is needed.

## **Developments in RF Sampling since 2010 RCM NS&EA**

### *UK(E&W)*

CEFAS has extended the survey planning to include on-site surveys of shore-based and private/rental boat angling, in order to estimate catch per unit effort for retained and released fish, and sizes of fish caught.

Considerable effort has been made in 2011 to plan the surveys and to engage with sea anglers to overcome resistance to providing data that some consider will be used to impose restrictions on sea angling. The first ONS survey took place in August 2011. Data collection for the charter boats, shore and private/rental boats will not start until January 2012.

### *Sweden*

The catches of cod in recreational fisheries in the Skagerrak / Kattegat area considered to be minor, compared with commercial catches (results from postal enquiries). Therefore, Sweden has for the last years put effort in performing on-site survey in Öresund (coordinated and reported in RCM Baltic). Enquiry on board Swedish commercial fishing-tourism-vessels bringing recreational fishermen fishing in Öresund which is the most important recreational cod catch area in Sweden. The survey will also be used as a cross study to compare the data collected against the national postal enquiry.

## ***Transversal variables***

The RCM NS&EA review the work done at the RCM Baltic 2011 meeting. In general the RCM NS&EA supports the work done and the comments made by the RCM Baltic 2011 though some additional comments added the text and have been included in the annex.

### **Common understanding of effort definitions:**

The common understanding of transversal variables would be clearer if well described definitions of terms exist. As far as Commission Regulation (EC) No. 665/2008 of the 14 July 2008 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 concerning the establishment of a Community framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the Common Fisheries Policy which establish the Data Collection Framework (DCF) and Commission implementing Regulation (EU) No 404/2011 of 8 April 2011 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy do not provide a definition of transversal variable "Fishing effort" and the variables which set up it, create a conditions to different common understanding following by wrong interpretation in the implementation of DCF.

According to the various Commission Regulations; Fishing effort means the product of the capacity and the activity of a fishing vessel; for a group of vessels it means the sum of fishing effort exerted by each vessel of the group. This definition of fishing efforts is officially described in article 2 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1954/2003 of 4 November 2003 on the management of the fishing effort relating to certain Community fishing areas and resources and modifying Regulation (EC) No 2847/93 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 685/95 and (EC) No 2027/95.

However, the common understanding of transversal variables would be clearer if more detailed definitions of terms used when calculating effort.

A paper from Fiskeriverket ("Regarding common definitions and understandings of transversal variables") was on 2010 provided to the RCM Baltic in 2010 included in the RCM Baltic 2010 report offers reasonable solutions to some issues regarding transversal variables:

- A day at sea should be attributed to the area where most time was spent during that day.
- If two or more métiers are practiced during a fishing day, a day for each métier practiced should be

- counted. Same practice for days at sea.
- Target species should be always selected on the basis of weight.

The approach described in this document may not be the only solution and is not an official final definition but just an attempt to solve the problem. It should be stressed that one should be careful if suing fishing days as the raising factor.

### Transversal variables, Control Regulation (CR) and DCF

Most of the transversal variables are at present collected by control authorities as a part of the fisheries control system. In most cases the data collected under CR fulfills the needs of DCF. However, in some cases the quality or the detail level of data collected under CR is not high enough to fulfill the DCF requirements and end users needs. Some variables which at present should be collected under DCF should preferably be collected according to the CR otherwise two parallel data collection systems need to be implemented. As an example soaking time could be mentioned. This information is equivalent to fishing hours and should not be collected separately. Data for transversal variables should, however, be collected on the basis of logbooks whenever possible as this is in cost efficiency sense the only reasonable option.

There are some examples, where the data recorded under CR does not exactly match with DCF requirements and end users needs. The basis for the Control Regulation is Annex V in EU Commission Regulation No. 404/2011 of 8 April 2011. It should though be mentioned that some MS have implemented obligations for the fishers to use an extended logbook that fulfill all the requirements according to the Control regulation and the DCF.

The RCM NS&EA used the table from the RCM Baltic 2011 and expanded the comments (annex XX) and proposes possible changes which would increase the usefulness of CR data from DCF perspective.

<b>Transversal variables</b>	
<b>STECF EWG 11-02 recommendation</b>	EWG 11-02 considers that duplication of Control Regulation No. 404/2011 of 8 April 2011 (CR) data collection commitments and the commitments according to the DCF should be limited to the cases where the data collected under the CR is unlikely to fulfill the data quality requirements of the DCF.  The Expert Group 11-02 recommends that overlap in the CR and the DCF should be avoided. Data collected under the CR should not be included in the DCF unless it is to be expected that the quality of the data collected under the CR does not fulfil the quality requirements of the DCF. STECF further recommends including in the new DCF commitments for Member States to set up at national or regional level, a system to encourage cooperation between control authorities and the National Programmes of the DCF. The cooperation system should address all issues of relevance for the collection and processing of data to be collected under the CR and the DCF.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Establishment of a system to encourage cooperation between control authorities and the National Programmes of the DCF.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	National correspondent, Member States authorities and the National DCF organization.
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	As soon as possible
RCM NS&EA 2011 comment	RCM agrees that duplicate time series should be avoided whenever possible. RCM agrees as well, that there is a need for cooperation. Such cooperation should be arranged on a national level and harmonized in RCM.

<b>Transversal variables</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 recommendation</b>	<p>As some of the transversal variables to be collected according to the DCF are collected according to the Control Regulation N0. 404/2011 and these variables the not always are defined equally according to the two regulations the RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 recommends:</p> <p>Variables Hours fished and soaking time should be added to Control Regulation 404/2011 (CR) and be included in the logbook as mandatory variables.</p> <p>The variable Fishing time might be excluded as this information is not used unless fishing authorities need this information.</p> <p>Variables Number of hooks and lines, Number of pots and traps, number of rigs should be defined more clearly in Control Regulation and for the purpose of the DCF reference to the CR could just be made.</p> <p>Concerning Number and height of nets, a more comprehensive approach is available in Control Regulation namely length, height and mesh size of the nets. This should be included in DCF by a reference to Control Regulation</p> <p>Use of selective devices should be mandatory reported in the logbook.</p> <p>Number of fishing operations should be included for all active gears in DCF (now only purse seine)</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<p>Logbooks should be further developed and updated in order making it possible for the fishers to record information needed for both the CR and the DCF. In the short term some of improvements may be reached nationally, as member states may change the optional fields of logbook as mandatory. Updating of DCF is also needed. In midterm, legislative updates are needed</p>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	<p>In short term: NCs are requested to report back to the national control authorities on this issue and report back to the RCM NS&amp;EA meeting in 2012</p> <p>For the legislation process: Liaison meeting &gt; STECF &gt; the EU Commission</p>
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	ASAP

## 4 Quality issues

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### 4.1.1 Regional data base - Data Call by RCMs for uploading data in Fishframe

A data call has been launched in preparation of the RCMNS&EA in order to prepare the ground of a regional ranking and also to gain experience in uploading into a regional database. At the start of the RCM meeting, France, Portugal and Spain had not uploaded their data yet into the test regional database (FishFrame); This had severe consequences in the ability for the RCMNS&EA to discuss the gaps and discrepancies in the sampling programmes in relation to the present fisheries.

In terms of the experience gained, the MS who were able to upload their data, could provide a well appreciated feed back.

Regarding the data not uploaded by Spain in the Regional Database FishFrame, Spain needs to clarify some points that considers essential (like confidentiality, security and usage of the data), and will not send data to FishFrame until this issue be clarified.

Regarding the data not uploaded by Portugal in the Regional Database FishFrame, the Portuguese National Correspondent apologizes for the problems caused in the RCMs. However, Portugal needs to clarify some points that considers essential, and will not send data to FishFrame until this issue be clarified and coordinated internally. A National Coordination Meeting is already scheduled to deal with the results of the RCMs, where these aspects of the regional database will be discussed. Soon the National Correspondent will contact, officially the Commission, on this subject

The RCMNS&EA noted that the representative of the Commission, proposed possible solutions such as the launching of clearer data call specifications and more flexible deadlines.

The representative of the Commission also stated its intention of further stressing data transmission obligations by closely analysing Annual Reports as from this year and by use of the forthcoming monitoring framework contract (outsourcing). The potential use of legal provisions concerning financial penalties under the DCF (Article 8) was also mentioned.

*Description of the Data call : MS are requested to upload 2010 national landings and effort data at DCF level 6 data into FishFrame before August 19, 2011. The aim of this data call is twofold:*

- *To gain experience in uploading data to FishFrame and to discuss these experiences at the RCM's*
- *To facilitate trial analyses for regional sampling strategies at the upcoming RCM's.*

*Please upload the data into FishFrame prior to the deadline. The FishFrame format specifications, upload facilities and contact details are available at [www.fishframe.org](http://www.fishframe.org). You can request a password for the website through the contact form available."*

### 4.1.2 Experience gained from uploading to Regional Database (FishFrame v5)

The RCMNS&EA compiled a full overview of the experience gained by the different MS which had successfully uploaded the data into Fish Frame, based on the data call.

- **Data calls for the RCM's**

#### **Mandatory or not**

Days At Sea (CE) and Official Landing Value (CL) are needed from all countries to do the regional ranking at the RCM's. At the moment these are not mandatory when uploading to FishFrame and therefore missing for some countries. A solution could be that the variables were set to be mandatory when uploading to FishFrame – up to the steering group to decide.

- **Metiers**

**Métiers (EU) vs. area** - To secure consistency in the use of métiers per fishing ground a check for this should be implemented in the upload process. To do this a relational table between area, métiers and year will be made

**Table 1 Structure of the relational table between area, métiers (EU) and area**

EU Fishing Activity Category	Area	Year
OTB_DEF_90-119_0_0	3an	2010
OTB_DEF_90-119_0_0	3as	2010

If uploading a combination of métier, area and year not specified in the table, then an error specifying the problem will come up and it will not be possible to upload data to FishFrame. If it is a valid combination then it will be added to the relational table.

This check will be based on the métiers accepted by the RCM's and checked against data already in FishFrame. For the RCM NS&EA the list Metier\_ReferenceTable\_FishingActivitieslv16 found on <https://groupnet.ices.dk/RCM2011/NSEA/Report%202011/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fRCM2011%2fNSEA%2fReport%202011%2fSub%2dgroup%5fmetiers&FolderCTID=%26View=%7b0E18095A%2dADB%2d4434%2d9957%2d27EB9F504EE3%7d> will be used.

It should be implemented in this autumn (2011) by the designers and developers of FishFrame.

For the above it is needed to have clear naming conventions for the problematic below. The decision should be taken by the steering group of FishFrame, so it is treat the same way for all regions.

**Fisheries with non-regulated mesh sizes – \_0\_0\_0 or \_>0\_0\_0** - An inconsistency in the naming has evolved – some use \_>0\_0\_0 to indicated that a gear has mesh, but the mesh size is non-regulated e.g. DRB\_MOL\_>0\_0\_0 and \_0\_0\_0 for gears without mesh e.g. LHP\_FIF\_0\_0\_0 – Other use \_0\_0\_0 for all gears.

**Unknown/unidentified**– At the moment we have a lot of different codes for this e.g. UND\_UND\_0\_0\_0, MIS\_MIS\_0\_0\_0 or Out\_Matrix6. In the North Atlantic it is the practice to use MIS for unknown gear and/or target species. I will make sense to use the same definition for all regions.

- **Exchange format**

Discrepancies exist between the exchange format and the reality of FishFrame, so a Update of the Exchange format is needed.

**Areas** - The coding of areas in area 27 does not follow the specification in the exchange format – e.g. 4c is used instead of 27.IVc

Is that ok or do it needs to be changed? The decision should be taken by the steering group of FishFrame.

If the coding of areas in area 27 is going to follow the current exchange format then it should be checked that it do not interfere with the VMS data format.

**Effort** – Due to aggregation of effort at a high level some of the ranges for effort have been broadened during the upload phase before the RCM.

**Species** – In the exchange format is it stated that

“Species

Only the FAO reference is valid (see [ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/stat/data/ASFIS\\_sp.zip](ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/stat/data/ASFIS_sp.zip)). “

this is not the case we use ICES’ Species Query Tool to check if a species is valid [http://datras.ices.dk/Data\\_products/qryspec.aspx](http://datras.ices.dk/Data_products/qryspec.aspx), which is based on the Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS)

**Plan** - An updated version of the Exchange format should be released in this autumn (2011) by the designers and developers of FishFrame.

- **Harbor**

**Coding of harbor** – At the moment it is up to each country to define codes for harbor. It will make sense to use some common codes preferable coupled with some geographical information. In other EU projects (VMS Tool) the EU Master Data Register has been used

([http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/control/codes/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/control/codes/index_en.htm) ).

The main problem is that none of the existing harbor/city list contains all harbours, so we will always end up inventing our own codes. The EU has put more effort into the maintenance of the codes in the EU Master Data Register, so if harbors are missing we can contact EU. What about non-EU port – are they maintained? I must be up to the steering group to decide, which coding we are going to implement.

- **Overwriting/deletion of data**

At the moment area is not a part of the overwriting of existing data – for CL - and the deletion function – for both CE and CL. This course troubles for countries where different institutes handle different fishing grounds. This should be fixed in this autumn (2011) by the designers and developers of FishFrame.

**“Data overwriting rules**

If data after correction (of already uploaded data) are re-uploaded to FishFrame, the new data overwrite the old similar data by the following key variables dependent of the data type:

**Commercial sampling (CS):** By Year, Country, trip, sampling type, project.

**Landing statistics (CL):** By Year, Quarter, Vessel flag Country and Species.

**Effort statistics (CE):** By Year, Quarter, Vessel flag Country, Fishing Activity, Area” – from ICES CM 2008/R:26.

- **Inclusion of areas outside ICES (FAO 27)**

During the uploading prior to the RCM’s other FAO areas have been included e.g. NAFO (FAO 21) and Eastern Central Atlantic. For ICES areas all stocks have been implemented, so when uploading data a stock will be ascribe to data based on species, area and quarter. At the moment this is not the case for the newly added areas, so all species caught there will have a pseudo stock e.g. *Pandalus borealis*-P. Is a stock/area relation needed for all areas? The decision should be taken by the steering group of FishFrame.

- **Definition of effort**

**Handling of trip crossing ‘boarders’ in time and space** – the exchange format needs to be clearer for these trips. At the moment it is only stated

“If a trip covers more than one rectangle/SubPolygon, the rectangle with the most fishing is used”

**In general a clear definition of the effort variables** – We need to be sure that we all interpret e.g. Days at seas the same way

**Plan** – The MS needs to document how they calculate effort. The steering group needs to ensure that the definition in the format is updated and all the needed measure of effort is in the Exchange Format.

- **Reports**

- Reports for the RCM's

At the moment it is possible to find most of the data used at the RCM's in existing report. 'Sampling effort and geographical coverage' shows approved, but non-processed data.

<http://www.fishframe.org> -> 'Data output' -> 'Report and analysis' -> 'Search by keywords'

**Ranking of métiers** - Development of a dedicated report for the ranking of métiers. It should be possible to choose which years to be part of the ranking. The output should be on region and fishing ground, so a relation between area and region/fishing ground should be established.

**Landings abroad** – Existing report 'Sampling effort and geographical coverage'.

- **Other**

**Export of lookup tables** – It should be possible to export the Lookup tables in FishFrame.

#### **4.1.3 Roadmap for the regional database and the steering committee (SC)**

During spring 2011 consultations were held between ICES, DTU Aqua and the Commission on the transfer of FishFrame for DTU to ICES. In previous meetings, RCMs expressed general consensus that hosting the RDB by an international organisation such as ICES should be preferred. The main reasons for this is that ICES has wide experience in maintaining international data bases. Also, ICES is one of the main data end-users and therefore having interest in the data, as these will be quite detailed and could be used by ICES working groups. ICES has agreed to host the RDB "FishFrame" from 1. January 2012.

There are several types of costs related to maintenance, management and development of a RDB. These types of costs include maintenance (hardware, upgrades etc.), support to users, management and further development of the database. Initially there will also be a cost related to the transfer of the database from the present host (DTU-Aqua) to ICES. The Commission has agreed to pay the costs of operating the RDB by ICES and will include it in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ICES and EU is going on.

At the interim Steering Group for Regional Databases (anon 2011) it was suggested that a Steering Committee for the RDB should be established. Organisation and tasks for the future SC as well as the role of the RCM's in the context of a RDB were discussed. The intention was to make the best use of the existing structure of meetings as well as defining the responsibility of different groups. The RCM's are considered to play a key-role in the implementation and overall steering of the RDB. The main reasons for this are that the RCM's will be the prime end-users of the data base. Also decisions on the development of the RDB which have impact on national budgets or are sensitive have to be endorsed by the NC's which are present in the RCM. However, the RCM's were not considered to be a realistic candidate for the technical governance of a RDB because they are already overloaded with other, mostly regional, tasks. Also the participants of the RCM may not have the required expertise.

The interim steering group proposes to set up of a formal Steering Committee (SC). This SC should for practical reasons be relatively small and consist of three members by region nominated by the RCM, preferably with different expertise (e.g. strategy, user, data expert, database expert, developer). At least one of their nominees should attend the regular RCM meeting. The SC should also include a representative of the host of the RDB. If non-EU countries express interest to participate in a RDB this would be very welcome and participation of these countries in the SC should be allowed.

The SC should be responsible for strategic planning, operational and technical issues and should also provide feedback to the RCM's. The participation in the SC meetings should reflect the issues to be discussed e.g. strategic discussions or specific technical issues and could thereby, if necessary, vary.

A lot of the work of the SC will have to be completed by correspondence, with possible annual meetings. The SC should be able convene small sub groups to deal with particular issues, e.g. a data calls. The SC is not the group that actually does the work but is essential that there is a good communication between the group and the developers.

The RCM NS&EA appointed the following persons for the regional database steering committee:

- Sieto Verver (The Netherlands): data user
- Richard Ayers (UK): IT expert
- Els Torreele (Belgium): data manager

Further the RCMNS&EA considered it to be advisable and useful to implement a module in the RDB containing the meta data information on the proposed an achieved sampling intensities (NP & AR). At present, this information can only be extracted from Excel files, attached to the NPs and ARs. Due to many inconsistencies and errors in these tables, it is not efficient to analyse these tables. Additionally, the manipulation of these tables can easily lead to introduction of extra errors. These problems could be solved by introducing a meta data information module in the database, which allows only the entry of legal data fields.

### **COST project**

The COST project provided a lot of useful experience in the use of the FISHFRAME data exchange format, challenging the FISHFRAME data exchange format with sampling data collected in a wide variety of sampling schemes, and for a wide number of species. This process both informed the way MS need to collect, record and store sampling data, and also presented the FISHFRAME developers with some experience of the challenges involved with expanding the use of FISHFRAME into more fisheries and in a wider geographic region. It also went a long way towards standardising the metrics of data collection across MS.

The COST project also produced software to provide structures, functions and procedures within the R statistical language that are very useful tools for manipulating and analysing sampling, landings and effort data within a common format. RCM NS& EA considers that a continuation of the COST project has tremendous potential to maintain and add to this existing resource linked to the development of a regional database.

However the regional data base and the ongoing expert workshops on sampling have, and will continue, to generate new data manipulation, statistical analysis and dissemination requirements which are not yet clear. RCM NS&EA therefore considered that it would be prudent to pause before specifying the exact form and aims of a further development of the COST project.

<b>Quality Issues: Quality indicators ACCU score card</b>	
<b>RCM NS &amp; EA 2011 Recommendation</b>	Experience be gained in assessing quality indicators on stocks using the WKACCU score card.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	WKACCU score cards to assess bias in the sampling of stock will be completed for OTB_MCD in area IIIa, OTB_DEF for haddock in area IV and cod in NAFO Division 3M.  Completed scorecards to be collated.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Scotland (Alastair Pout) to collate submissions of all MS (link to share point)
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	1st August 2012.

## 5 Review of the DCF list of surveys

The SGRN 10-03 report, including the comments by STECF Plenary (PLEN 10-03, Nov. 2010), was presented to the RCM NS&EA.

SGRN 10-03 reviewed and evaluated over 100 research surveys that had been proposed by Member States for DCF funding. The Review Group met in Brussels during 4-8 October 2010 and consisted of 12 invited experts and a chair appointed by DG MARE. The Terms of Reference (ToR) were developed by SGRN 09-04 and approved by STECF. The primary ToR was to develop a prioritised list of surveys to be supported by the DCF according to six criteria developed by SGRN 09-04 and approved by STECF:

- 1) international coordination and harmonisation;
- 2) designed to inform management decisions, including the monitoring of ecosystem variables;
- 3) access to data by the scientific community;
- 4) survey coverage;
- 5) no duplication between surveys; and
- 6) history of the survey data.

Secondary terms of reference were to (a) identify data gaps and research needs for the ecosystem approach to fisheries management and (b) provide feedback on the lessons learned during the survey review and suggest ways to improve future reviews.

The primary materials for the review were a set of regional spreadsheet tables of proposed surveys that had been prepared by the RCMs. The Review Group agreed that each survey for each criterion would be assigned a score of 1, 2, or 3 to indicate the degree to which the survey met the criterion and that two of the evaluation criteria would be sub-divided. Thus criterion (1) was split into (1a) internationally coordinated and (1b) harmonised, and criterion (2) was split into (2a) fisheries management and (2b) ecosystem management needs, making a total of eight scores (1, 2 or 3) to be assigned to each proposed survey.

The ToR for the Surveys Review provided no guidance on how much weight to assign to each criterion when developing an overall priority score. The Review Group agreed to calculate the priority score for a survey as the weighted average of the scores (1,2,3) assigned to the criteria for that survey using the following weightings:

Criterion	Weight	Criterion	Weight
1a. Internationally coordinated	15%	3. Data access	5%
1b. Harmonized	15%	4. Survey coverage	10%
2a. Fisheries management	35%	5. No duplication	10%
2b. Ecosystem mgt needs	5%	6. History of use	5%

The Review Group evaluated information and produced scores for 92 different surveys: 52 from the Atlantic region, 11 from the Baltic Sea, 8 from the Black Sea and Mediterranean, and 21 from the North Sea and Eastern Arctic. Several additional surveys in the master spreadsheet tables from the RCMs were not evaluated because they appeared to be incorrectly specified as being eligible for funding under the DCF.

About one third of the proposed surveys that the Review Group evaluated received high priority scores, in the range  $1 \leq X < 1.1$  (34 surveys, 37%). About half the surveys received scores in the range  $1 \leq X < 1.2$  (47 surveys, 51%). A relatively small number of surveys received low priority scores  $2 \leq X$  (11 surveys, 12%).

With regard to data gaps and research needs, the Review Group agreed to revise the term of reference into two separate ideas: (a) data gaps in the existing suite of surveys with respect to providing stock assessment advice and (b) data provided by surveys that support the ecosystem approach to fisheries management. Although little progress was made during the meeting on these issues, some progress was made by correspondence. In particular, an example stocks-by-surveys matrix was prepared to illustrate stocks for which surveys do not currently provide supporting information and other stocks for which several surveys provide information. The stocks versus surveys matrix could be a useful tool in a strategic process for planning future surveys and other forms of fisheries research.

STECF PLEN 10-03 noted that *"the down-weighting by the SGRN survey review of the evaluation criterion 'ecosystem management needs' has created some debate on the limited scope of the DCF ecosystem indicators (Appendix XIII of COM Decision 2010/93/EU). These indicators were developed by three SGRN working groups in 2005-2007 within the frame of the Data Collection Regulation (DCR), which was operating at that time. The indicators were designed to make use of existing surveys and fisheries information. Consequently, the inclusion of further ecosystem aspects, such as the collection of data on environmental conditions and other ecosystem elements such as plankton and benthos, was not in the scope of STECF-SGRN 10-03 WG and has to be discussed in relation to the revision of the DCF."*

STECF discussed the possibility of a cost-benefit analysis, contrasting survey costs with the (financial) value of the investigated resource. In the light of the multi-stock and multipurpose use of survey data, however, the interpretation of such analysis might become very complex and potentially misleading. Moreover, the 'added value' of surveys, delivering information and sampling material for ecosystem studies and aspects of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, cannot be estimated on any reliable basis at present.

STECF further discussed if a more regular review of surveys with regard to their use in stock assessment on a more analytical basis could be envisaged. This would allow for consideration of relatively short survey series that could fulfil the evaluation criteria sooner and would provide an objective basis for the importance of surveys with regard to informing the stock assessment process. STECF considers that this analytical approach could be conducted in a research study, rather than tasking a STECF working group with this issue.

As the "French Channel Groundfish Survey" (CGFS) was mistakenly not evaluated by SGRN 10-03, an Addendum (OWP 11-01) was prepared by the Review Group in a written procedure, using the same procedure and criteria as applied at SGRN 10-03, and endorsed by STECF.

STECF EWG 11-02 (Brussels, March 2011) further discussed the data needs for addressing descriptors of "Good Environmental Status" (GES) under the "Marine Strategy Framework Directive" (MSFD), mainly related to surveys. EWG 11-02 was mainly building upon work by the ICES "Working Group on Integrating Surveys for the Ecosystem Approach" (WGISUR) and the ICES "Report of the Workshop on Cataloguing Data Requirements from Surveys for the EAFM" (WKCATDAT). The group supported the continued work of WGISUR and its associated workshops, and STECF should be provided with reports from these groups. EWG 11-02 recommended that the conclusions of the subgroup be incorporated in the ToR of future WGISUR meetings and that WGISUR explicitly extends its remit to the relevant coordinated surveys in the Mediterranean and Black Sea (e.g. MEDITS & MEDIAS). The group also recommends that steps be taken to extend formal collaboration in WGISUR between ICES & GFCM as soon as possible.

The timeline for further progress on this issue is currently unclear as the CFP reform, MSFD initial assessment and other processes are still ongoing.

### ***Proposal from Spain and Portugal to include the coordination meeting of the International Flemish Cap Survey in the list of DCF eligible meetings***

The institutes involved (Table 10) in the Flemish Cap survey in NAFO (Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization) Div. 3M, usually had a meeting in order to prepare the next Flemish Cap survey and coordinate the use of the previous survey data in the assessment work to be presented during the next NAFO Scientific Council June meeting.

Table 10: Some common participants to the Flemish Cap survey co-ordination meeting:

Name	Institute	Designated expert for NAFO Stock	Obs.
Antonio Vázquez Rodríguez	IIM-CSIC <sup>1</sup>		NAFO SC <sup>4</sup> member
Francisco Saborido Rey	IIM-CSIC		
Sergio Iglesias Martínez	IEO <sup>2</sup>		
Xabier Paz Canalejo	IEO		

José Miguel Casas Sánchez	IEO	Div. 3M Northern Shrimp	
Diana Gonzalez Troncoso	IEO	Div. 3M Cod	NAFO SC member
Fernando González Costas	IEO	SA 2+3 Roughhead Grenadier	NAFO SC member
Javier Murillo Perez	IEO		NAFO SC member (WGEAFM <sup>5</sup> )
Antonio Ávila de Melo	IPIMAR <sup>3</sup>	Div. 3M Redfish; Div. 3LN Redfish	NAFO SC member
Ricardo Alpoim	IPIMAR	Div.3M American plaice	NAFO SC member

<sup>1</sup>Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas; <sup>2</sup>Instituto Español de Oceanografía –Vigo; <sup>3</sup>Instituto Nacional de Recursos Biológicos (INRB-IPIMAR); <sup>4</sup>Scientific Council; <sup>5</sup>SC Working Group on Ecosystem Approaches to Fisheries Management

This type of meetings is very important to guarantee a good logistics of the Flemish Cap survey and maximize the use of survey data in due time in the production of research documents informing NAFO stock assessments. An annual meeting was a common practice some years ago when it was funded by the several projects directly related to the EU Flemish Cap Survey series. In recent years, it was not possible to have all the necessary participants in the meeting due to the lack of funding. However, in the current DCF, this type of meeting is not eligible, on the other hand the number of participants and the specificity of the subject do not fit into the RCM's agenda, as well as due to the area in question (NAFO) also does not fall within the ICES Survey Planning Groups that are in the list of DCF eligible meetings. As such, this meeting has the same status as any ICES Survey Planning Group.

For these reasons, Spain and Portugal propose to include this coordination meeting in the DCF eligible meetings from 2012 onwards. A summary report of the meeting in English is expected to allow all interested parties to follow its outcome.

### **Flemish Cap Survey Coordination Meeting**

*Chairman:* Antonio Vázquez (Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas, CSIC-IIM, Vigo, Spain)

*Date:* First Quarter

*Place:* Spain (Vigo) or Portugal (Porto or Lisbon)

*Number of participants:* approx. 15 persons

*Duration:* Maximum 2 days

### **Common Agenda:**

ToR 1. Appointment of a Rapporteur

ToR 2. Review of the actions of the last meeting

ToR 3. Review feedback of the outcomes of the last survey

ToR 4. Review of the software and databases to use in the survey

ToR 5. General discussion on the tasks to be addressed in the forthcoming Flemish Cap survey

#### 5.1 - Objectives

5.2 - Methods

5.3 - Calendar

5.4 - Staff on board

ToR 6. Any other business

<b>Surveys: Flemish Cap Survey</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA recommends including the coordination meeting of the International Flemish Cap Survey (NAFO Div 3M) in the DCF eligible meetings. The objectives are to guarantee good logistics of the survey and maximize the use in due time of survey data in the production of research documents to be presented during the NAFO Scientific Council June meeting.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Meeting to be included in DCF eligible list of meetings
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	DG-MARE, Antonio Vázquez (CSIC-IIM, Spain)
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Immediately

## 6 Studies, pilot projects and workshops

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### ***Proposal for Call for Tender***

The study was proposed by Denmark. The objective of this study is to use this inter-disciplinary approach to verify stock discrimination from otolith hatching estimation and validate histologically maturation patterns of the larger herring stocks in the North Sea, Kattegat-Skagerrak and the Baltic Sea.

#### **6.1.1 Proposed title: Optimising sampling and data for herring stock ID and spawning stock estimation**

#### **6.1.2 Brief description of the study:**

Management and scientific advice on fisheries of herring (*Clupea harengus*) in the North Sea and Baltic Sea require consideration of stock complexes including components differing in distribution, migration and spawning patterns. The mixing of stocks in these areas challenges monitoring, and acquisition of accurate data for stock assessment. This involves stock ID differentiated from otolith characteristic, e.g. time of hatch related to spawning season, and maturity data for estimation of spawning stock size. Otolith-based analyses used in stock discrimination show spawning-time fidelity for e.g. North Sea autumn spawning herring and western Baltic spring spawning herring, whereas several analyses indicate that other East Atlantic herring stocks exhibit switching, where e.g. individual herring west of Scotland as well as Atlanto-Scandic herring hatched in one season may spawn in another. Maturity data used in assessment are generally based on judgements of maturity from gross morphology of gonads using visual criteria. This maturity staging often differs among laboratories causing invalidity of data and omission of their utilisation in assessments. However, accurate designation of specimens to populations is possible by a combination of otolith microstructure, otolith shape and fish meristic characters, and maturity stages of individual specimens judged by visual inspection can be unambiguously validated by histological analysis using microscopic structures as criteria for maturity determination. Integration of these methodologies in monitoring for data quality assurance can promote an accurate determination of spawning stock size of the individual herring populations, validate the different stock components and thereby provide information important to management of stocks.

The objective of this study is to use this inter-disciplinary approach to verify stock discrimination from otolith hatching estimation and validate histologically maturation patterns of the larger herring stocks in the North Sea, Kattegat-Skagerrak and the Baltic Sea. An output in this study will be a recommendation on the optimal sampling time for maturity estimation for the different stock components thereby enhancing sampling and quality of data for stock assessment and management.

#### **6.1.3 Background**

Atlantic herring population dynamics are complex, and different stocks often display variation in life history and spawning season as well as genetic structuring. Recent studies combining otolith information and histologically verified maturation patterns indicates reproductive plasticity in timing of spawning of some stock components in the North Sea and in the Baltic Sea with either switching of spawning time or a high frequency of skip of spawning in some herring stocks.

At present herring sampling and determination of maturity take place in a variety of ways including visual staging of gonads in frozen fish, visual judgement of gonad maturity in fresh fish at sea, histology on preserved gonads, but without accompanying otolith analysis. The maturity scales used for this purpose are often ambiguous, not histologically verified and not standardized among institutes. This leads to maturity data of variable quality, which are generally not utilised for regular updating of maturity ogives. The maturity ogive currently employed for Central Baltic herring assessment has not been regulated since 2001, which also is the case for Western Baltic herring, while North Sea autumn spawning herring assessment uses estimated maturity ogives from the most recent North Sea Acoustic cruise only, underutilising available stock representative data.

In fact, all member states are obliged to sample maturity data for herring according to the commission decision (2008/949/EF). However, no guidance exists for optimising the sampling frame (survey, commercial fleet, harbour samples) that accounts for the relative distribution pattern of the stocks and the mixing of stocks in the same feeding areas. Consequently the member states sample data used for stock ID and maturity in a variety of ways. A clear guidance to the member states, coordinated by the RCM, on optimisation of sampling time and efforts in general for the various herring stock components will facilitate coordination of task sharing between member states and ensure that input data for stock assessments will reach the required quality and sampling programs will be more cost effective.

#### 6.1.4 Terms of reference

The main products of the study should aim at improving input to stock assessment that makes predictions of fishing opportunities robust in relation to existing or developing management plans. The products should provide guidance for optimal sampling as well as validation of stock ID and maturity data of different herring populations in the North Sea, Kattegat-Skagerrak and the Baltic Sea based on an integrated interdisciplinary approach. The study should facilitate an efficient planning for optimal sampling coverage of the dominant herring stocks in these areas in relation to estimation of stock ID and spawning stock size for the separate stocks. A training program should be established e.g. through an extension of the EC funded WebGr (Web services for support of Growth and Reproduction Studies) (<http://webgr.azti.es/ce/search/myce>). Main tasks to be undertaken by the contractor are the following:

- Validate the application of otolith morphology for stock ID by comparing spawning type with histological maturity determination at the individual level.
- Provide histologically validated maturity estimates for stock assessment for the major herring stocks at population level and a key to interpret existing data.
- Based on these results design an optimised sampling program of the herring stocks in relation to biological parameters including maturity, spawning stock ID in the North Sea, Kattegat- Skagerrak and the Baltic Sea, predominantly based on existing scientific surveys.
- Establish training programs based on validated material, which use a platform of wide spread open source software to enhance quality of data collection on herring growth and reproduction.

#### 6.1.5 Timetable and Final Report

The duration of the study shall not exceed 18 months from the signature of the contract. An interim report of the study should be made available after 12 months of the signature of the contract and a final report should be made available within one month of the termination of the project.

#### 6.1.6 Budget

The maximum budget allocated for this study is € 400.000 covering all expenses, including personnel, sampling, laboratory consumables and overheads.

Estimated allocation of resources in percent of total:

Consumables	12
Travel	15
Personel	73

## 7 Any other business

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### *Changes in the observer at sea programme from Denmark*

In 2011 a new sampling system has been introduced in the Danish sampling program, where the vessels are selected on a stratified random selection, based on last year's data. For each metier and quarter a vessel selection spreadsheet has been computed and the vessels are weighted with the amount of trips conducted in the same quarter and water one year earlier. When a vessel is selected by the computer the observers are calling the skipper and ask for the possibility to conduct an observer trip. As the system is weighting the amounts of trips conducted by the vessel it is possible to select the same ship more than once in a quarter. The skippers answers are registered in a log. If a skipper has refused to have observers onboard we do not recall the same skipper that year although the ship is selected again, however the ship is registered again with the same answer. If the skipper says "no" but is given a more vague answer (try again later or it is not fitting very good right now) we are calling again the next time the vessel is being selected.

Since the 1. quarter 2011 refusal rates has been registered for the inner Danish waters and since 2. quarter 2011 in the North Sea and Skagerrak. Refusal rates have been categorised in 8 main answers; 1) Is not fishing at the moment or is fishing in another metier 2) ship is wrecked 3) no contact 3) Try later 4) skipper claims the sheep is too small 5) Ship has been sold 6) refuse to have observers on board 5) observer trip conducted.

The RCM-NSEA have adopted and adjusted the main “answer” categories to be suitable for more MS

- 1) Is not fishing at the moment (shipyard, bad weather, private reasons ..)
- 2) Is fishing in another metier (Is fishing but not in the selected area or with the selected metier)
- 3) Ship is wrecked
- 4) No contact (Register all the calls, wrong number to skipper?)
- 5) Try later (Is not willing to bring any observers right now, but it is ok to call back at a later time)
- 6) Skipper claims the sheep is too small (safety reason)
- 7) Ship has been sold (If the ship is still fishing in the same metier and area it can be used)
- 8) Refuse to have observers on board (A direct no to bring observers onboard)
- 9) Observer trip conducted

### ***Participation of National Correspondents in RCMs***

Based on earlier experiences, the agenda of the RCMs is sometimes considered too technical for National Correspondents (NCs), resulting in relative low participation of NCs in the RCMs. This situation differs from MS to MS, depending on the structure of the organization within a MS. In some MS the NC is a biologist, taking part in multiple RCMs, in other cases the role of the NC is mainly based on administrative tasks. For the latter group, the 6<sup>th</sup> LM recommended that the NCs of the MS involved in a RCM, should, at least, be invited to the meeting for the last day, to facilitate the finalization of e.g. bilateral agreements and to be brought up-to-date on the latest decisions and recommendations proposed by the RCM. During the RCMNS&EA, it was confirmed that this is of great importance that the NCs are present at the RCM and the recommendation of the 6<sup>th</sup> LM proved to be very relevant.

The RCM NS&EA discussed this change in procedures with the NCs attending the meeting. In general, the approach to attend the meeting for the last day worked out for the NCs and the condensed way to get informed was appreciated. The NCs wish to proceed with this construction for the upcoming years.

Furthermore, the NCs confirmed their interest in having the option to meet outside the RCM, when all NCs are present. A first meeting with all NCs took place in April 2011, a second meeting is scheduled for the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2011.

### ***Sharepoints***

The RCMs had true SharePoint facilities at its disposal. As expected, these Sharepoints eased the work of the RCMs by providing a central place for storage of documents, presentations and the exchange of files. The RCM NS&EA expressed the wish to continue the SharePoints as facilitated for by ICES and RCM NS&EA thanks ICES for the efficient implementation of the sharepoints.

Outside the SharePoints, there is a need for a central depository where all legal documents (e.g. regulations and decisions), reports (e.g. RCM, LM, SGRN reports) and guidelines can be found. The JRC website provides the basis for such a depository, but this repository currently lacks up-to-date information and is not well maintained. The DG Mare representative in the RCM NS&EA shared the concerns of the RCM and agreed to discuss the matter with JRC.

## 8 Chairmanship, venue and dates of next meeting

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While taking into account EU Regulation 665/2008 Article 4.2, RCM NS&EA the chair for RCMNS&EA 2012, is Els Torreele (Belgium) .

Following the proposed work schedule for 2011 (section 7.1), the next RCM NS&EA will be held in August or September 2012. The RCM appreciated the invitation by Belgium to hold the meeting at the Institute for Agriculture and Fisheries in Ostend.

In order to facilitate the common memory of the group, the following table provides an overview of the venues and chairmanship of this RCM.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Chair</b>
2011	Hamburg, Germany	Els Torreele, Belgium
2010	Charlottenlund, Denmark	Sieto Verver, The Netherlands
2009	Boulogne-sur-Mer, France	Sieto Verver, The Netherlands
2008	Aberdeen, UK-Scotland	Christoph Stransky, Germany
2007	Uddevalla, Sweden	Christoph Stransky, Germany
2006	The Hague, The Netherlands	Jørgen Dalskov, Denmark
2005	Bergen, Norway	Guus Eltink, The Netherlands
2004	Oostend, Belgium	Richard Millner, UK-England

## 9 Summary of recommendations

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_SV_01: Stock variables: investigate opportunities for task sharing age reading</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 Recommendations</b>	The RCM NS&EA recommends that the task sharing species are investigating by MS participating in current age reading programs and decide whether task sharing is desirable or possible for the future.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	MS to investigate each task sharing opportunity with specific MS taking responsibility for each species and report for the chair of RCM NS&EA
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Each MS noted in column labelled "Leading countries" to liaise with MS without expertise for that species.
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	1 December 2011

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_SV_02: Stock variables: completion of the maturity sampling table</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 Recommendations</b>	The RCM NS&EA recommends that all assessment and expert groups complete the last two columns of the overview on maturity sampling within Annex X5 ( <a href="https://groupnet.ices.dk/RCM2011/NSEA/Report%202011/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fRCM2011%2fNSEA%2fReport%202011%2fSub%2dgroup%5fstocks&amp;FolderCTID=&amp;View=%7b0E18095A%2dADB0D%2d4434%2d9957%2d27EB9F504EE3%7d">https://groupnet.ices.dk/RCM2011/NSEA/Report%202011/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fRCM2011%2fNSEA%2fReport%202011%2fSub%2dgroup%5fstocks&amp;FolderCTID=&amp;View=%7b0E18095A%2dADB0D%2d4434%2d9957%2d27EB9F504EE3%7d</a> and to check all other data columns. This table will be available on SharePoint for update.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Check that assessment and expert groups have updated the table and report back to RCM NS&EA 2012.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	ICES and all ICES assessment and expert groups
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	RCM NS&EA 2012

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_QA_01: Quality issues: use of FishFrame as regional database</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 Recommendations</b>	The RCM NS&EA recommends that that all MS respond to the data call in 2012 from the chair of RCM NS&EA and load their data to FishFrame or make it available in the FishFrame format. This data call will include Commercial Landings (CL), Commercial Effort (CE) and Commercial Samples (CS) records for 2010 and 2011.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	MS to have responded to the data call. If issues persist then ICES to inform the chair of RCM NS&EA
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	All MS and chair of RCM NS&EA
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Data call in February 2012 and then deadline 4 months later

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_QA_02: Quality issues: sampling summary information</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 Recommendations</b>	RCM NS&EA recommends ICES to use the list of NC contacts available to all WGs. The list is on the DCF website <a href="https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents?p_p_id=20&amp;p_p_lifecycle=0&amp;p_p_state=maximized&amp;p_p_mode=view&amp;p_p_col_id=column-1&amp;p_p_col_count=1&amp;_20_struts_action=%2Fdocument_library%2Fview%20folderId=20944..">https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents?p_p_id=20&amp;p_p_lifecycle=0&amp;p_p_state=maximized&amp;p_p_mode=view&amp;p_p_col_id=column-1&amp;p_p_col_count=1&amp;_20_struts_action=%2Fdocument_library%2Fview%20folderId=20944..</a>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	None
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	ICES
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Immediately

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_QA_03: Quality issues: data raising methods</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 Recommendations</b>	RCM NS&EA recommends that each MS should send a representative to WKPICS to discuss data collection and the methods used to raise this data for assessment use and that WKPICS adds this to its ToR.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	MS participates in WKPICS
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	All MS
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	End of WKPICS 2011

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_SV_03: Stock Variables: Studies on shared international age-length keys</b>	
<b>RCM NS &amp; EA 2011 Recommendation</b>	<p>Sampling for ages and the construction of ALK should follow sound statistical sampling practices set out according to WKPRECISE. Greater emphasis should be placed on the collection of age samples for species subject to age based stock assessments as the collection of length frequency data not linked to age samples may be of limited benefit in improving bias and precision estimates for numbers at age.</p> <p>Databases structures should allow storage of linked age and length samples.</p> <p>Collection regulations should not encourage the collection of length only data at the expense of age sampling for species subject to age based assessments.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<p>MS to review their sampling for ages and construction of ALKs (if used).</p> <p>Commission to frame collection regulations so as to encourage best statistical practice.</p>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	MS, Commission
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	To be considered for the new DCF

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_SV_04: Metier and stock variables: Concurrent sampling</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA is of the opinion that the sampling methods for obtaining catch compositions be reviewed before the implementation of the new DCF.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	SGRN / Commission
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	SGRN / Commission
<b>Time Frame (deadline)</b>	To be included in the new Decision (end 2012)

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_M_01: Métier related variables: Routines for establishing bilateral agreements</b>	
<b>RCM NA 2011 Recommendation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MS should make sure that their landings abroad are included in their FishFrame upload allowing the RCM to analyse the possible needs for bilateral agreements.</li> <li>- The RCMs should perform an annual analysis on landings in foreign countries and conclude where bilateral agreements need to be made. MS should set up agreements, fixing the details of sampling, compilation and submission of data in each case when it is indicated by the RCM that a bilateral agreement is needed. Standard output algorithms to enable analysis of compiled data should be included in FishFrame.</li> <li>- MS should set up agreements, fixing the details of sampling, compilation and submission of data in each case it is concluded by the RCM that a bilateral agreement is needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Follow-up actions</b>	MS to make sure landings abroad data are included into FishFrame
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	MS
<b>Time frame</b>	Annually. Deadline 1 <sup>st</sup> of July 2012.

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_M_02: Metier and stock variables : Metier descriptions</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 Recommendation</b>	MS to fill update metier descriptions already compiled by RCM NS&EA 2010 and using the standard template complete descriptions for any new metiers identified. Updated and new files to be uploaded by Fishing Ground coordinators.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	All MS
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	RCM NS & EA 2012

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_M_03: Métier related variables: Regional agreements on framework for the analysis of landings abroad</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 Recommendation</b>	<p>In order to identify where bilateral agreements on sampling of foreign landings have to be set up, the RCM NS&amp;EA agreed on a common understanding of thresholds for sampling. It was agreed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• should MS landings be less than 200 tonnes (incl. landings in MS) there should be no sampling requirement, this should not be applied to stocks where there is a low TAC</li> <li>• RCM should analyse the landings of MS and, where suitable, resolve sampling of landings abroad and obtain agreements at the RCM. If this is not possible a bilateral agreement should be implemented between the MS concerned</li> <li>• that the analysis on sampling agreements are needed, should be done annually by the RCM using landing data from the previous year.</li> <li>• the agreement has to include descriptions on how the data should be collected and who is responsible to process the data</li> </ul>
<b>Followed actions needed</b>	Commission should be contacted for acceptance of this proposal
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	The Chair of the RCM NS&EA

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_SUR_01: Surveys:</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2010 Recommendation</b>	RCM NS&EA recommends including the coordination meeting of the International Flemish Cap Survey (NAFO Div 3M) in the DCF eligible meetings. The objectives are to guarantee a good logistics of the survey and maximize the use in due time of survey data in the production of research documents to be presented during the NAFO Scientific Council June meeting.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	DG-MARE
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2012

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_TV_01: Transversal variables</b>	
<b>STECF EWG 11-02 recommendation</b>	EWG 11-02 considers that duplication of Control Regulation No. 404/2011 of 8 April 2011 (CR) data collection commitments and the commitments according to the DCF should be limited to the cases where the data collected under the CR is unlikely to fulfill the data quality requirements of the DCF. The Expert Group 11-02 recommends that overlap in the CR and the DCF should be avoided. Data collected under the CR should not be included in the DCF unless it is to be expected that the quality of the data collected under the CR does not fulfil the quality requirements of the DCF. STECF further recommends including in the new DCF commitments for Member States to set up at national or regional level, a system to encourage cooperation between control authorities and the National Programmes of the DCF. The cooperation system should address all issues of relevance for the collection and processing of data to be collected under the CR and the DCF.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Establishment of a system to encourage cooperation between control authorities and the National Programmes of the DCF.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	National correspondent, Member States authorities and the National DCF organization.
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	As soon as possible
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 comment</b>	RCM agrees that duplicate time series should be avoided whenever possible. RCM agrees as well, that there is a need for cooperation. Such cooperation should be arranged on a national level and harmonized in RCM.

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_TV_02: Transversal variables</b>	
<b>RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 recommendation</b>	<p>As some of the transversal variables to be collected according to the DCF are collected according to the Control Regulation NO. 404/2011 and these variables the not always are defined equally according to the two regulations the RCM NS&amp;EA 2011 recommends:</p> <p>Variables <b>Hours fished</b> and <b>soaking time</b> should be added to Control Regulation 404/2011 (CR) and be included in the logbook as mandatory variables.</p> <p>The variable <b>Fishing time</b> might be excluded as this information is not used unless fishing authorities need this information.</p> <p>Variables <b>Number of hooks and lines</b>, <b>Number of pots and traps</b>, <b>number of rigs</b> should be defined more clearly in Control Regulation and for the purpose of the DCF reference to the CR could just be made.</p> <p>Concerning <b>Number and height of nets</b>, a more comprehensive approach is available in Control Regulation namely <b>length, height and mesh size of the nets</b>. This should be included in DCF by a reference to Control Regulation</p> <p>Use of <b>selective devices</b> should be mandatory reported in the logbook.</p> <p><b>Number of fishing operations</b> should be included for all active gears in DCF (now only purse seine)</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Logbooks should be further developed and updated in order making it possible for the fishers to record information needed for both the CR and the DCF. In the short term some of improvements may be reached nationally, as member states may change the optional fields of logbook as mandatory. Updating of DCF is also needed. In midterm, legislative updates are needed
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	In short term: NCs are requested to report back to the national control authorities on this issue and report back to the RCM NS&EA meeting in 2012 For the legislation process: Liaison meeting > STECF > the EU Commission
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	ASAP

<b>RCMNS&amp;EA_QA_04: Quality Issues: Quality indicators ACCU score card</b>	
<b>RCM NS &amp; EA 2011 Recommendation</b>	Experience be gained in assessing quality indicators on stocks Using the WKACCU score card.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	WKACCU score cards to assess bias in the sampling of stock will be completed for OTB_MCD in area IIIa, OTB_DEF for haddock in area IV and cod in NAFO Division 3M. Completed scorecards to be collated.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Scotland (Alastair Pout) to collate submissions of all MS (link to share point)
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	1st August 2012.

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- EC 2008b. Commission Regulation (EC) No 665/2008 of 14 July 2008 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 concerning the establishment of a Community framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the Common Fisheries Policy
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## **Annex 1:** Legal requirements – definition of the role of the RCM

### **Council Regulation 199/2008**

#### **Article 5: Coordination and cooperation**

1. Member States shall coordinate their national programmes with other Member States in the same marine region and make every effort to coordinate their actions with third countries having sovereignty or jurisdiction over waters in the same marine region. For this purpose the Commission may organise **Regional Coordination Meetings in order to assist Member States in coordinating their national programmes and the implementation of the collection, management and use of the data in same region.**

2. In order to **take into account any recommendation made at regional level at the Regional Coordination Meetings**, Member States shall where appropriate **submit amendments to their national programmes** during the programming period. Those amendments shall be sent to the Commission at **the latest two months prior to the year of implementation.**

### **Commission Regulation 665/2008**

#### **Article 4: Regional co-ordination**

1. The Regional Coordination Meetings referred to in Article 5(1) of Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 shall **evaluate the regional co-ordination aspects of the national programmes and where necessary shall make recommendations for the better integration of national programmes and for task-sharing among Member States.**

2. The **Chair** of the meeting shall be designated by the Regional Coordination Meeting in agreement with the Commission for a **two year period.**

3. The Regional Coordination Meetings may be convened once a year. The **terms of reference** for the meeting shall be proposed by the Commission in agreement with the Chair and **shall be communicated to the national correspondents** referred to in Article 3(1) **three weeks prior to the meeting. Member States shall submit to the Commission the lists of participants two weeks prior to the meeting.**

In the **Commission Decision 2010/93/EU**, precise requirements for the RCMs are made or regional aspects are addressed :

- *Section A. Collection of economic variables*
  - Subsection 2.4.(d) : “Regional Coordination Meetings shall define homogeneous clustering methodology at the level of supra regions so that economic variables are comparable.”
- *Section B1 : Collection of Metier-related variables*
  - Subsection 2.1 : “Regional agreement on mergers shall be sought at the relevant Regional Coordination Meeting and endorsed by STECF”
  - Subsection 2.4 : “For the purpose of collection and aggregation of data, spatial sampling units may be clustered by regions “
  - Subsection 3.1.(d) : “Precision values and ranking system are referenced at the same level as the sampling programmes, i.e. at the national métier level for data that are collected through national programmes and at regional métier level for data that are collected through regionally coordinated sampling programmes.”
  - Subsection 3.1.(f) : “The list of Group 3 species shall be established at the regional level by the relevant regional co-ordination meeting and agreed by STECF.”
  - Subsection 3.2.(c) : “Precision values and the ranking system are referenced at the same level as the sampling programmes, i.e. at the national métier level for data that are collected through national programmes and at regional métier level for data that are collected through regionally coordinated sampling programmes.”
- *Section B2 : Collection of Stock-related variables*

◦ Subsection 5.2 : When the shares of quotas correspond to less than 10% of the Community share and the sum of relevant quotas, of MS whose allocation is less than 10%, account for more than 25% of the Community share, “the relevant Member States may set up a coordinated programme to achieve, for their joint landings, a joint sampling scheme”.

◦ Subsection 5.3 : “If appropriate, the national programmes may be adjusted until 1<sup>st</sup> February of each year to take into account the exchange of quotas between Member States:”

◦ Subsection 5.4 : “For stocks for which TAC's and quotas have not been defined and which are outside the Mediterranean Sea, the same rules established under point 5(1) apply on the basis of the average landings of the previous three years and with reference to the total Community landings from a stock;”.

◦ Subsection 5.5 : “For stocks in the Mediterranean Sea, the landings by weight of a Mediterranean Member State for a species corresponding to less than 10 % of the total Community landings from the Mediterranean Sea, or to less than 200 tonnes, except for Bluefin tuna.”

- *Section C : Collection of transversal variables*

◦ Subsection 2.2 : “The degree of aggregation shall correspond to the most disaggregated level required. A grouping of cells within this scheme may be made RCM NA 2011 – Final report provided that an appropriate statistical analysis demonstrates its suitability. Such mergers must be approved by the relevant Regional Coordination Meeting.”

- *Appendix II : Geographical stratification by Region*

◦ Footnote : “Sub-regions or fishing grounds are established by Member States for the first programming period (2009-2010); they may be redefined by Regional Coordination Meetings and agreed by STECF if necessary.”

- *Appendix VIII : List of transversal variables with sampling specification*

◦ Footnote 2 : “some adjustments could be proposed by Regional Coordination Meetings”

**Annex 2:** Agenda

EU DATA COLLECTION FRAMEWORK (DCF),  
REG. 199/2008, 665/2008 AND DECISION 2010/93/EC

**Regional Co-ordination Meeting for the North Sea & Eastern Arctic (RCM NS&EA)**

**Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute [vTI]), Hamburg, Germany**

**Monday, 26 of September to Friday, 30 of September, at 13.00**

*Annotated Agenda*

Working hours: Mon 13.30-18:00

Tue 09:00-18:00

Wed 09:00-18:00 (20.00 social evening)

Thu 09:00-18:00

Fri 09.00-13.00

Coffee/tea breaks: 10:30 & 15:00

Lunch break: 12:30-13:30

Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2011

13.30 Opening of the meeting, housekeeping, and adoption of the agenda.

14.30 General discussion on the tasks to be addressed and appointment of sub-group chairs and sub-group rapporteurs.

- **ToR 3a: *Metier related variables*** (4-5 person)
- **ToR 3b: *Biological, Stock related variables*** (4-5 person)
- **ToR 3c: *Transversal variables*** (4-5 person)
- **ToR 5: *Quality*** (2 person to collate information and report to the RCM and the report)
- **ToR 6: *Surveys*** (1 person to collate information and report to the RCM and the report)

15.30 : **ToR 2** : Review feedback from data end users; STECF EWG's and ICES benchmark meetings. – Presentation from ICES

(Barbara – Amélie)

16:30 : **ToR 1**: Review progress in regional co-ordination since the 2010 RCM (follow-up of recommendations) and 7th Liaison Meeting report.

## Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> of September

09:00 : Plenary –

10:00 Work in sub-groups for remaining day.

13:30: Work in sub-groups for remaining day

16:30: State of progress in the sub-groups, plenary discussion where needed.

- Presentation on VMS data – Jorgen Dalskov
- Presentation on “ALK” experiment

## Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> of September

09:00 : State of progress in the sub-groups and tasks of the day

Presentation linked to ToR5

Presentation on Sampling Design changes Denmark (example)

10:00: Work in sub-groups

16:00: Plenary

*19.00: Social dinner*

## Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2011

09:00 : **ToR 6** : Review the DCF list of surveys

09:30 : Experiment uploading data in Regional database – feed back from DTU Aqua (Kirsten) – problems encountered – input experience from Baltic RCM

11:30: Plenary – input NCs – input EC

-

13:30 :. **ToR3 + ToR 5** :

- Using RDB (FF) and the data call for sampling coordinating and data processing tool – evaluate progress made
- Quality indicators in new DCF? –
- Transfer to ICES
- Financing
- Representation in SC RDB
- Further development (EWG 2011-08)

- Actions for 2011 & 2012: coordination and analysis
- Communication to/from RDB
- Future expectations and road map RDB – workshop FF

15:30: State of progress of sub groups: plenary discussion where needed. For all items and issues, propose actions and where possible conclude regional agreements on the collection of data.

## Friday, 30 September 2011

08:30 – 11:00:

**ToR5:** Quality issues: COST 2 & quality parameters

**ToR3c:** Transversal variables

**ToR8:** AOB

- ES/PT request for support recommendation
- Polish request halibut (Ireneusz Wójcik)
- Accessibility & comprehensiveness of RCM Report (Els/Katja)
- Legal obligation recording Data submission (Christophe)
- Communication with sector on all level: document to be made conflict between monitoring & control / template of letter for explaining
- Date & venue SC
- Intersessional work
- Date & venue RCMNS&EA2012

**ToR 7 :** Studies and pilot projects.

Drafting text by sub-group

11:00 : Presentation / Discussion of all RCM NS&EA recommendations.

13:00 : Closing of the meeting