Collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy. Recast

2015/0133(COD) - 18/06/2015 - Document attached to the procedure

This Commission staff working document accompanies the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and the use of data in the fisheries sector and support for the scientific advice regarding the Common Fisheries Policy (recast).

The revision of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) is part of the Commission's Regulatory Fitness Programme (REFIT) which seeks to cut red tape and remove regulatory burden. This means simplifying the DCF at different levels.

More specifically, the document:

1. explains the rationale behind the modifications and simplification and the technical details necessary to understand those modifications;
2. describes the current data collection system and improvements for change;
3. describes the preparatory work consisting of the publication of a roadmap discussing several legislative options, further consultations;
4. explains the options choices for improvement and simplification of the system, including the modification of the legal setup.

Overall, **the current DCF has been criticised** on a number of levels by a broad range of stakeholders including the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), Member States and end-users, for **not reflecting sufficiently the needs of end-users in terms of deciding on what data should be collected or how this should be done, and not being flexible enough to address their evolving needs**, e.g. new stocks being exploited, changes to technical measures regulations, development of scientific advice, move to statistically sound sampling schemes etc. Currently, the DCF Regulation contains provisions for the establishment of 3-year multiannual EU programmes but **no provisions are included regarding modifications of these three year programmes**, or how the needs of end-users should be taken into account to draw them up or modify them.

Proposed solutions: in an attempt to respond to criticisms and improve the DCF, the Commission has examined the current system and has proposed a number of solutions. It is proposed to:

- **include criteria in the DCF Regulation to determine what data should be included in the multiannual EU programmes**, including the end-user need for the data;
- design the new multiannual EU programmes, and future amendments to it, based on consultation of end-user;
- include, in the DCF regulation, provisions on the amendment of the multiannual EU programmes;
- include, in the future data collection system, four key areas in which end-users of DCF data should be better involved: (i) end-user input (advice) in determining what should or should no longer be collected; (ii) end-user involvement in designing the sampling programmes that Member States must carry out to collect those data that end-users will use; (iii) end-user access to DCF data; (iv) end-user feedback on the data they have accessed;

- provide **regions with a greater range of tasks** concerning planning and implementing data collection. This would be achieved through the establishment of **Regional Coordination Groups** (RCGs), to deal with regional issues, as well as an EU Coordination Group (EUCG), to deal with EU-wide issues. The RCGs and EUCG would enable Member States to work on regional or EU cooperation throughout the year, rather than just through an annual meeting as is currently the case;
- in the context of governance structure, **strengthen the current Regional Coordination Meetings (RCM) mechanism**, without giving them a legal entity, but broadening the scope of areas they may work on;
- extend the scope of the DCF to reflect the CFP's new emphasis on **ecosystem impacts of fisheries**;
- include, in the revised DCF Regulation, an **obligation for Member States to carry out biological sampling** on all stocks targeted or by-caught by EU vessels, including on the discarded fraction of the catches, but without specifying the method for the data collection;
- streamline the data transmission and storage for fishing activity data;
- revise the scope of DCF Regulation so that obligations to collect socio-economic data cover also **freshwater aquaculture**;
- develop an **improved impact assessment** of decisions on fisheries management;
- establish EU-wide clear and harmonised rules on access to fishing activity data to progress towards exchange of data between Member States and facilitate access to fisheries data;
- define in DCF Regulation the basic rules and principles for data availability, including rules on personal data protection;
- develop an IT system for DCF data availability;
- develop **single entry point** for accessing DCF data;
- allow for a gradual shift from "a push" to "a pull system", i.e. to move from a system of data calls initiated by end-users, to a system of data availability ensured by the data providers.