



## **MAC ADVICE**

### **Data Collection by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF)**

Brussels, 23 September 2020

#### **1. Introduction**

The current framework of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) was established by the Commission Decision of 25 February 2016 setting up a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (2016/C 74/05).

STECF, in the field of conservation and management of living marine resources, including biological, economic, environmental, social and technical considerations, assists the European Commission in the preparation of legislative proposals, delegated acts and policy initiatives. Furthermore, the group monitors the evolution of policy and brings about an exchange of experience and good practice. These tasks follow Article 26 of the Common Fisheries Policy.

Among the reports produced by STECF, the Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet, the biennial Economic Report on the EU Aquaculture Sector, and the biennial EU Fish Processing Sector Economic Report have particular relevance for the work of the MAC.

#### **2. Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet**

The MAC welcomes the annual publication of the Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet, which is highly valued by the EU fishing fleet as well as by the other relevant stakeholders. While recognising the sound scientific basis of the report, the MAC would like to draw attention to inconsistencies in some of the price averages, for example for mackerel, connected to the geographical areas covered. Currently, STECF does not have access to the necessary control price data on the sales notes to be able to produce fully realistic averages.

The MAC is aware that the data is provided by the Member States to the Commission under the Data Collection Framework. Therefore, the MAC urges the Commission and the Member States to develop a solution to provide aggregated control data on sales prices, preferably by fleet

segment and management areas, to national experts and to STECF, while respecting the applicable privacy requirements.

The MAC is also aware that data collection practices vary among Member States. While some Member States focus primarily on the sales notes information, others focus on surveys. The MAC encourages Member States to coordinate and share best practices, in order to ensure uniformity in the quality of the data used by STECF. The MAC further encourages the Member States to provide data on all active fishing vessels, including those under 10m.

The MAC would also like to draw attention to some inconsistencies in the averages connected with processing vessels. In the case of these fishing vessels, it is possible for the buying and the selling company to be same, which can distort the average figures. As such, special attention should be provided to these cases, in order to limit distortions as much as possible.

Taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on fishing operations and of the ongoing oil price war, the MAC highlights that the modelling for the 2020 and 2021 reports will need to be adapted. Therefore, the Commission should consider the use of complementary data from EUMOFA, experts, and stakeholders.

### **3. Economic Report on the EU Aquaculture Sector**

The MAC welcomes the biennial publication of the Economic Report on the EU Aquaculture Sector, which is highly valued by the EU aquaculture sector as well as by the other relevant stakeholders. Considering the mentioned value, the MAC believes that this report should have an annual periodicity. Taking into account the growing relevance of the EU aquaculture sector, the MAC further believes that this report should be as detailed as the Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet and should also include economic forecasts for the sector.

The MAC considers that special consideration should be given to aquaculture enterprises that are also involved in some level of processing.

### **4. EU Fish Processing Sector Economic Report**

The MAC welcomes the biennial publication of the EU Fish Processing Sector Economic Report, which is highly valued by the EU fish processing sector as well as by the other relevant stakeholders. Considering the mentioned value, the MAC believes that this report should have an annual periodicity and should include economic forecasts for the sector.

The MAC believes that, when analysing the profitability of the processing sector, special consideration must be given to the sector's relationship with the distribution sector and the price wars between distributors in some Member States, which is connected to the high concentration among these. In order to have even more added value, the report, in relation to profitability, should distinguish between fresh products and processed products, since the final markets are significantly different. The structure of sales in the retail channel of processed products should also be taken into account.

The MAC is concerned regarding potential discrepancies in the average profitability of the sector, particularly in the Spanish market. As such, the MAC urges the Member States to transmit to the Commission all potentially relevant information communicated by the private operators, in order to ensure fully realistic averages by STECF.

In the context of the Farm to Fork Strategy, the MAC believes that it would be relevant to assess how the seafood sector competes with other food sectors in terms of research, innovation, and product development, while taking into account the different scales of the sectors.

## **5. Conclusion**

The MAC believes that STECF plays a crucial role in assisting the Commission in the field of conservation and management of living marine resources, but also by providing high-quality scientific information to stakeholders in general.

The MAC welcomes the increasing collaboration with STECF, including the possibility to attend, as observers, the meetings on the abovementioned reports. The MAC will aim to ensure continued representation at these meetings.

The MAC also welcomes the regular presentations by Commission representatives of the abovementioned reports at its meetings as well as the possibility to exchange views and the receptiveness to feedback from the members.

The MAC will aim to promote, among its membership, the submission of additional data to the forecasts prepared by STECF.

The MAC commits to proposing, at a later stage, suggestions of specific analysis, including species, fleet segments, and areas, for the consideration of STECF, as well as more detailed data on aquaculture.