

## WGBIOP – Working Group on Biological Parameters

2017/MA2/EOSG17

The **Working Group on Biological Parameters** (WGBIOP), chaired by Pierluigi Carbonara, Italy, Cindy van Damme, The Netherlands and Julie Olivia Coad, Denmark will meet in Ghent, Belgium, **1–5 October 2018**, to work on ToRs and generate deliverables as listed in the Table below.

	MEETING DATES	VENUE	REPORTING DETAILS	COMMENTS (CHANGE IN CHAIR, ETC.)
Year 2018	1–5 October	Ghent (Belgium)	Interim report by 9 November 2018 to EOSG, SCICOM& ACOM	
Year 2019			Interim report by “DATE” to EOSG, SCICOM& ACOM	
Year 2020			Final report by “DATE” to EOSG, SCICOM& ACOM	

## ToR descriptors

TOR	DESCRIPTION	BACKGROUND	SCIENCE PLAN TOPICS ADDRESSED	DURATION	EXPECTED DELIVERABLES
a	Plan studies, workshops and exchange schemes on interpretation of fisheries data on stock-related biological variables, and review the output	Review incoming suggestions for inter-session work from EGs, WKs and other ICES related groups, e.g. planned benchmarks	21, 25, 31	Generic ToR	Yearly provision of a prioritized overview of planned studies, workshops and exchanges will be delivered to PGDATA for review
b	Improve training and quality assurance of age reading and maturity staging. Identify the need for validation studies and assign priorities.	Routines for monitoring the quality of age and maturity are currently based on national protocols and these need to be standardized. Validation is essential to ensure the accuracy of biological data used as input for assessment	20, 21, 25, 30, 31	Generic ToR	Review the current national procedures for quality assurance. Devise best practice guidelines on a regional level. Continuous monitoring of the implemented standardized guidelines.

c	Evaluate the quality of biological parameters: Issues and guidelines	Guidelines were established in 2017 for a qualitative evaluation of biological parameters. This ToR will further develop these guidelines, for (quantitative) quality indicators of biological parameters.	25, 27	3 years /Generic	Generic guidelines for a quantitative evaluation of the quality of biological parameters. Evaluation of issues put forward by the assessment WGs for benchmark species in 2018–2020. Carrying out case studies on one or two species through a specific workshop in close cooperation with stock assessors.
d	Investigate and develop data availability, documentation and methods to improve identified biological parameter estimates, as input to assessment models.	WGBIOP 2015–2017 identified a series of life-history parameters required by end-users by means of literature review, input from experts and in consultation with Expert Groups on Integrated Ecosystem Assessment and Multispecies modelling.	20, 25, 30	3 years	Document current sources of life-history parameter estimates identified by ICES/GFCM Expert Groups, as critical components and relevant to improvement of modern assessment for ICES/GFCM stocks. Facilitate a closer link between data providers and data end-users.
e	Address requests for technical and statistical recommendations /advice related to biological parameters and indicators	Filled templates for requests send to WGBIOP before a specified deadline will be the basis for this ToR	25, 26, 30	Generic ToR	Each received request for technical and statistical recommendations related to biological parameters and indicators will be addressed and included in the WGBIOP work plan where appropriate
f	Update and further develop tools for the exchanges and workshops (e.g. SmartDots and statistical tools.)	Based on feedback from users of these tools, improvement/alterations will be evaluated	27, 28	Generic ToR	Potential improvement/alteration of the tools on a yearly basis.

## Summary of the Work Plan

Year 1	Continue the collation of ToR d) information related to biological parameters; c) benchmark issue lists and guidelines; ToR a, b, e and f are generic tors and will be dealt with on a yearly basis in WGBIOP. Begin the process of realigning the scheduling of WGBIOP exchanges/Wks with the benchmark cycle.
Year 2	Continue the collation of ToR d) information related to biological parameters; c) benchmark issue lists and guidelines; ToR a, b, e and f are generic tors and will be dealt with on a yearly basis in WGBIOP. Devise and implement best practice guidelines for quality assurance on a regional level under ToR b.
Year 3	Review the current status of issues, achievements and developments that falls under the remit of WGBIOP, identify future needs in line with the ICES objectives and Science Plan and the wider marine environmental monitoring and management within Europe and propose a future/alternative work plan

## Supporting information

Priority	A main objective of WGBIOP will be to support the development and quality assurance of regional and national provision of biological parameters as reliable input data to integrated ecosystem stock assessment and advice, while making the most efficient use of expert resources. As biological parameters are among the main input data for most stock assessment and mixed fishery modelling, these activities are considered to have a very high priority.
Resource	None.
Participants	All National Age Reader/Maturity Stager Coordinators (ICES and GFCM) will be invited. Experts relevant to the current Benchmark of the year of WGBIOP will be invited as well as relevant external experts such as statisticians or specific EG members.
Secretariat facilities	None.
Financial	None.
Linkages to ACOM and groups under ACOM	WGBIOP supports ACOM and SCICOM by promoting improvements in quality of biological parameters from fishery and survey data underpinning the integrated ecosystem assessment approach.
Linkages to other committees or groups	WGBIOP links with the SCICOM/ACOM Steering Group: Ecosystem Observation Steering Group (EOSG). It links to stock assessment EGs and benchmark assessment groups by providing input on the data quality. WGBIOP also links with, the Regional Database Steering Group
Linkages to other organizations	Regional Coordination Groups and PGMed