Documentation of the

Regional Database and Estimation System

Data Model

RDBES Data Model doc. v. 1.19.5

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Table of Contents

[Philosophy of the data model 6](#_Toc157426617)

[Key Concepts in RDBES Data Model 7](#_Toc157426618)

[Sampling Data (CS) 7](#_Toc157426619)

[Aggregated Commercial Landings (CL) and Commercial Effort (CE) 8](#_Toc157426620)

[Fields in Commercial Landings (CL) data format 8](#_Toc157426621)

[Fields in Commercial Effort (CE) data format 11](#_Toc157426622)

[Common fields for CE and CL data 16](#_Toc157426623)

[Description of each table 17](#_Toc157426624)

[Upper hierarchy 17](#_Toc157426625)

[Auxiliary tables 19](#_Toc157426626)

[Lower hierarchy tables 19](#_Toc157426627)

[Hierarchy Summary 20](#_Toc157426628)

[Table 1 Upper hierarchies 22](#_Toc157426629)

[Vessel Details and Species List 23](#_Toc157426630)

[Upload order of the record types 23](#_Toc157426631)

[Table 2 Lower hierarchies 24](#_Toc157426632)

[Overwriting rules for data upload 24](#_Toc157426633)

[The design variables and hierarchies 25](#_Toc157426634)

[Design variables (applies to all tables that are part of hierarchies) 25](#_Toc157426635)

[Sampling hierarchies (applies to Design Table; Sample Table) 25](#_Toc157426636)

[Samples (applies to all tables that are part of hierarchies) 26](#_Toc157426637)

[Total units and Sampled units (applies to all tables that are part of hierarchies) 26](#_Toc157426638)

[Stratification (applies to all tables that are part of hierarchies) 26](#_Toc157426639)

[Clustering: One stage and Two stage cluster sampling (applies to all tables that are part of upper hierarchies, except sample) 29](#_Toc157426640)

[Selection and inclusion probabilities (applies to all tables that are part of hierarchies) 30](#_Toc157426641)

[Sample selection methods (applies to all tables that are part of hierarchies) 30](#_Toc157426642)

[Sample Weights 31](#_Toc157426643)

[Catch category 31](#_Toc157426644)

[Catch categories – under Sample SA 32](#_Toc157426645)

[Catch categories – under Commercial Landing CL 32](#_Toc157426646)

[Recording of otoliths and scales collected 33](#_Toc157426647)

[New features of the RDBES 33](#_Toc157426648)

[True zero values and Non-recording zero values in species sampling 33](#_Toc157426649)

[Non-responses and missing values due to quota sampling 34](#_Toc157426650)

[Recording of incidental by-catches and slipping 34](#_Toc157426651)

[Non-responses collected field 35](#_Toc157426652)

[Auxiliary variables 35](#_Toc157426653)

[Other key concepts 36](#_Toc157426654)

[Commercial species 36](#_Toc157426655)

[Recording of samples collected by fishers or control (new in the RBDES) 37](#_Toc157426656)

[Recording of non-probabilistic sampling (new in the RBDES) 37](#_Toc157426657)

[Annex I: Description of each hierarchy 38](#_Toc157426658)

[Hierarchy 1 Sampling from a vessel list or from a reference fleet 38](#_Toc157426659)

[Hierarchy 2: Sampling from a list of trips 40](#_Toc157426660)

[Hierarchy 3: Sampling where time (e.g., days, weeks) is the primary sampling unit and vessel is the second sampling unit 42](#_Toc157426661)

[Hierarchy 4 Sampling by selecting from location\*time (e.g. harbour-day), then from Fishing Trips, then from Landing Events from those Fishing Trips 44](#_Toc157426662)

[Hierarchy 5 Sampling by selecting from location\*time (e.g. harbour-day) as primary sampling unit, then from Landing Events as the secondary sampling unit. 46](#_Toc157426663)

[Hierarchy 6 Sampling where Fishing Trips are sampled 48](#_Toc157426664)

[Hierarchy 7. Sampling at markets or ports, where location\*time is the primary sampling unit 50](#_Toc157426665)

[Hierarchy 8 Sampling where time (e.g., days, weeks) is the primary sampling unit and vessel is the secondary sampling unit 52](#_Toc157426666)

[Hierarchy 9 Sampling where location is the primary sampling unit, time is the secondary sampling unit and fish the tertiary sampling unit 54](#_Toc157426667)

[Hierarchy 10 Sampling where vessel is the primary sampling unit, time is the secondary sampling unit and trip is the tertiary sampling unit 56](#_Toc157426668)

[Hierarchy 11 Sampling where location is the primary sampling unit, time is the secondary sampling unit and fishing trip the tertiary sampling unit 58](#_Toc157426669)

[Hierarchy 12 Sampling where location is the primary sampling unit, time is the secondary sampling unit and landing event the tertiary sampling unit 60](#_Toc157426670)

[Hierarchy 13 Sampling where fishing operation is the primary sampling unit 62](#_Toc157426671)

[Lower Hierarchy A: Length stratified biological samples 62](#_Toc157426672)

[Lower Hierarchy B: Only length frequency data is taken from sample(s)/subsample(s) 64](#_Toc157426673)

[Lower Hierarchy C: All individuals in the sample/subsample are biologically analyzed 65](#_Toc157426674)

[Lower Hierarchy D: No length measurements or biological analyses 66](#_Toc157426675)

[Annex: II RDBES 67](#_Toc157426676)

[Annex III: Frequently asked questions 69](#_Toc157426677)

[FAQ 1 69](#_Toc157426678)

[FAQ 2 70](#_Toc157426679)

[FAQ 3 70](#_Toc157426680)

[FAQ 4 70](#_Toc157426681)

[FAQ 5 70](#_Toc157426682)

[FAQ 6 70](#_Toc157426683)

[FAQ 7 71](#_Toc157426684)

[FAQ 8 71](#_Toc157426685)

[FAQ 9 71](#_Toc157426686)

[FAQ 10 72](#_Toc157426687)

[FAQ 11 72](#_Toc157426688)

[FAQ 12 73](#_Toc157426689)

[FAQ 13 74](#_Toc157426690)

[FAQ 14 74](#_Toc157426691)

[FAQ 15 74](#_Toc157426692)

[FAQ 16 74](#_Toc157426693)

[FAQ 17 75](#_Toc157426694)

[FAQ 18 75](#_Toc157426695)

[FAQ 19 76](#_Toc157426696)

[FAQ 20 76](#_Toc157426697)

[FAQ 21 77](#_Toc157426698)

[FAQ 22 77](#_Toc157426699)

[FAQ 23 77](#_Toc157426700)

[FAQ 24 78](#_Toc157426701)

[FAQ 25 78](#_Toc157426702)

[Annex IV: Incidental bycatch and slipping 79](#_Toc157426703)

[Annex V: Algorithms for the calculation of both inclusion and selection probabilities 83](#_Toc157426704)

[Annex VI: Examples of the use of Stratification and Clustering 85](#_Toc157426705)

[Annex VII - Selection methods (the whole annex section is new) 88](#_Toc157426706)

[Data use 88](#_Toc157426707)

[Use of selection methods during estimation in the RDBES 88](#_Toc157426708)

[Probabilistic selection 88](#_Toc157426709)

[Non-Probabilistic selection 89](#_Toc157426710)

[Quasi probabilistic selection methods (NPQSRSWOR, NPQSRSWR and NPSYSS) 89](#_Toc157426711)

[Judgement sampling (NPJS) 90](#_Toc157426712)

[Convenience sampling (NPCS) 91](#_Toc157426713)

[Cross-Level Quota sampling (NPCLQS-T, NPCLQS-O) 92](#_Toc157426714)

[Other selection methods 93](#_Toc157426715)

[Fixed Sample (FIXED) 93](#_Toc157426716)

[Unknown (Unknown) 94](#_Toc157426717)

# Philosophy of the data model

The data model that is described in this report is intended to be used in the new Regional Database and Estimation System (RDBES) that is currently being developed by ICES. Some more details about the RDBES can be found in Annex II.

The aims of the RDBES are:

1. To ensure that data can be made available for the coordination of regional fisheries data sampling plans, in particular for the EU DC-MAP Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs),
2. To provide a regional estimation system such that statistical estimates of quantities of interest can be produced from sample data,
3. To increase the data quality, documentation of data and ensuring of approved estimation methods are used,
4. To serve and facilitate the production of fisheries management advice and status reports,
5. To increase the awareness of fisheries data collected by the users of the RDBES and the overall usage of these data.

In the longer term it is expected that the new RDBES will replace both the current RDB and InterCatch systems and provide a single platform for countries to produce statistical estimates of quantities of interest (such as discards and age or length distributions) which will then be used as inputs for assessment working groups.

The RDBES data model is an evolution of the work already done in defining and using the current Regional Database (RDB) and the COST data models and functions. The current RDB data model provides a common data structure to describe commercial sampling data at a disaggregated level, and commercial landings and effort data at an aggregated level. **The significant difference in the new RDBES model is that it provides a common structure to describe both the disaggregated sampling data and, most importantly, how it was sampled.**

The RDBES data model should allow a variety of different estimation techniques to be used including the COST functions that make use of Age-Length keys, ratio estimators, and unbiased designed based estimations. Future workshops will be held to further test and develop how these estimation techniques can be used with the new model and the model adjusted if needed.

The RDBES data model should be seen as part of the movements towards:

* Statistically Sound Sampling Schemes (4S),
* Greater regional coordination,
* Transparent Assessment Framework (TAF),
* Improved estimates to ICES assessments.

Whilst the RDBES data model is designed to hold 4S data it will also be able to store data that is not sampled in a statistical manner – this is important so that data from current non- statistical programmes can be uploaded and historical data can also be stored. However, in doing so, the new RDBES data model flags those data thus allowing their appropriate interpretation during estimation.

# Key Concepts in RDBES Data Model

**The most important step in populating the RDBES data model is that you must first specify the design of your sampling programmes.** This is because, contrary to the RDB, there is not a single set of tables that everyone must populate and upload: With a few exceptions, the tables that need to be populated and uploaded depend on the specific sampling design(s) each country used.

Specifying the sampling design is not always clear-cut, particularly in the case of old undocumented data or sampling schemes that depart greatly from the principles of probability-based sampling. Useful hands-on guidance on the documentation of sampling plans and the identification of sampling designs (including the definition of the hierarchies involved in multi-stage sampling) can be found in ICES EGs reports such as WKPICS, SGPIDS, WKRDB 2014-1 and WGCATCH.

The data model for the RDBES is shown in the spreadsheet “RDBES Data Model.xlsx”. The first sheet is an overview of all the tables, and in the following sheets each table is defined in details. Depending on the sampling scheme a combination of tables will have to be populated with data.

## Sampling Data (CS)

To allow for the variety of sampling designs used in different institutes and countries the RDBES uses a slightly different approach to most database designs you might be used to. Rather than specifying tables and the fixed relationships between them the RDBES identifies a number of different **sampling hierarchies** – these represent the different hierarchical sampling techniques that are used in practice. Two types of hierarchy are used in the model – the **upper hierarchy** describes how a sample is selected, whilst the **lower hierarchy** describes what type of length-frequency or biological variables are measured for that sample. The sampling hierarchies are defined in terms of the **tables** they consist of and the **relationships** between them. All tables contain **columns**. Some of these columns are described as **design variables** (DV) and represent important sampling concepts like stratification, population and sample size, inclusion probability or sampling method. These will be described in more details in Section “The new design variables”. Tables will typically appear in a number of different hierarchies. There are two types of tables: **hierarchy tables** and **auxiliary tables**. Hierarchy tables are those which contribute to the selection of a sample, whilst auxiliary tables contain data of interest which does not directly contribute to the sampling design. A table can appear as a hierarchy table in one sampling hierarchy whilst it can appear as an auxiliary table in another. In most hierarchy tables the **rows** represent individual samples taken at that particular stage of the sampling hierarchy.

To populate the data model:

1. Identify the different sampling schemes you will use as the source data.
2. Ensure you understand how the sampling scheme is defined.
3. For each sampling scheme you have identified in point (1) identify which **upper hierarchy** is the best match by using the spreadsheet “Hierarchies and relating tables” to see the situations under each hierarchy and read the “Description of each hierarchy” in the Annex I in this document, to determine which hierarchy to use.
4. Extract your national data to populate the **upper hierarchy** tables. Refer to section “The new design variables” for details about how to complete the new **design variables.**
5. Now identify which **auxiliary tables** you will be supplying data for and populate them.
6. For each sample you will need to decide which **lower hierarchy** you will be using – this describes whether the sample contains length-frequency data, biological measurements, or both or none.
7. The tables of the **lower hierarchy** can now be populated.
8. Data for each hierarchy have to be in a separate data files one for each hierarchy e.g. 2, 7, 8

## Aggregated Commercial Landings (CL) and Commercial Effort (CE)

In the RDBES data model the aggregated effort and landings data are kept in the commercial landings (CL) and commercial effort (CE) tables.

These data formats are collecting aggregated data from national commercial fisheries. It allows for both official and scientific estimates of landings and effort in order to have transparency in what is scientific estimates. The scientific estimates will be used for scientific work, e.g, stock assessment, and the official will be used for reference to compare with other data sources, and to illustrate what are scientific estimates. The RDBES should make it possible to use the data to populate the future ICES data call and preferably also the STECF FDI data call.

Below is a description on how to fill in fields in the two tables, where it is not obvious.

### Fields in Commercial Landings (CL) data format

**Data sources:** In the dataset, it is possible to specify the official weight and a scientific weight. The scientific weight could e.g. be estimates for the small-scale fisheries based on sampling. To make it transparent, it has been made possible to add information on data sources in the data format. Data should not be duplicated, meaning that there should only be given one estimate on the scientific weight, which can be based either on official data or sampling data. The data source of the landings value is also included in the data format. The data sources are given in four fields:

* ***Data type of scientific weight***: The scientific weight can be based on either official data or based on estimates. This field can be filled in according to the DataTypeOfScientificWeight //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1620 vocabulary with:

“Official”: Official data, which can be:

1) census data (e.g. control regulation data as logbooks, sales notes, declarative forms eventually combined) or

2) official sampling data

“Estimate”: Data coming from scientific estimates based on scientific sampling or scientific reevaluation and not officially registered and/or reported, as agreed in the EU-MAP (EU 2021/1167) regulation "where there is no obligation under control regulation to record these data, or where these data do not meet the coverage, resolution and/or quality requirements of the end users, alternative appropriate sampling methods shall be applied").

Dot not provide overlapping data.  
see. Commission delegated decision (EU) 2021/1167 - Chapter II, article 3  
see. Control regulation data: Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009

* ***Data source of scientific weight***: Source of the data provided in the table.  
  Census data issued from the control regulation as specified in the DataSourceOfScientificWeight vocabulary //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1619 i.e. “Logbooks”, “Sales notes”, “Other declarative forms” or “Combination of censusdata”. If based on samples specify "Sampling data".
* ***Sampling scheme behind scientific weight*:** If sampling data are used to estimate the scientific weight, the sampling scheme should be specified in the *Sampling scheme*. The codes for sampling scheme is maintained in the vocabulary SamplingScheme //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1664.. If a sampling scheme is missing, send an email to [RDBsupport@ices.dk](mailto:RDBsupport@ices.dk) to request codes for national sampling schemes.
* ***Data source landings value***: The value of the landings (Euro) can be obtained from different sources, which is specified in this field. The codes are maintained in the vocabulary DataSourceLandingsValue //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1618, e.g. “Sales notes” if they are derived directly from sales notes”, “Average prices”, “Combination of sales notes and average prices” or “Other” if the value of the landings are estimated from other sources.

**Examples of use of official vs. scientific weight**

Example 1: landings from trawler with logbook. Combination of logbook and sales notes data.

Example 2: landings from trawler with logbook. Combination of logbook and sales notes data. Square corrected based on VMS data.

Example 3: landings from trawler with logbook. Combination of logbook and sales notes data. Official industrial species reallocation based on samles.

Example 4: landings from trawler. Combination of logbook and sales notes data. Area correction based on VMS data.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Field** | **Example 1** | **Example 2** | **Example 3** | **Example 4** |
| Data type of scientific weight | Official | Official | Official | Official |
| Data source of scientific weight | Saln | Saln | Sampld | Saln |
| Data source of landings value | Saln | Saln | Saln | Saln |
| Area | 27.3.d.24 | 27.3.d.24 | 27.3.d.24 | 27.3.d.24 |
| Statistical rectangle | 39G4 | 39G4 | 39G4 | 39G4 |
| Data source of statistical rectangle | RepLogbook | EstPosData | RepLogbook | EstPosData |
| species FAO code | COD | COD | SPR | SPR |
| Metier 6 fishing activity | OTB\_DEF\_>120\_3\_120 | OTB\_DEF\_>120\_3\_120 | OTM\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0 | OTM\_SPF\_32-69\_0\_0 |
| Official weight | 100 | 100 | 1100 | 500 |
| Scientific weight | 100 | 100 | 1100 | 1000 |
| Explain difference |  |  |  | Area correction |
| Total official landings value | 500 | 500 | 500 | 250 |

**Landing category and Catch category**: The landing category indicates the intended usage of the landing while the catch category indicates the possible fractions of the catch:

* ***Landing category***: The intended usage at the time of landings, code specified in the vocabulary LandingCategory //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1609. Can be set to e.g. Industry (Ind), human consumption (HuC) or None for logbook registered discards.
* ***Catch category***: This field should match the Catch category field from sampling data, but only includes the relevant codes specified in the vocabulary CatchCategory //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1610, e.g. “Lan” for landings (above minimum reference size), “RegDis” for logbook registered discards and “BMS” for landings below minimum reference size. “Catch” for catch and “Dis” for discard are not allowed, since discard is not recorded and reported in the commercial landing CL.
* ***Logbook registered discard category*** *(optional)*: If RegDis has been specified in the CatchCategory, the category of logbook registered discards can be specified in this field. The codes are specified in the vocabulary RegDisCategory //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1694, e.g. DamagedFish, DeMinimis, HighSurvivability.

**Landings weight and value:** In the data format the both the official and a scientific landings weight are included, and there is a field to indicate reason for the difference, if they are not equal.

* ***Official weight***: The live weight in kg from official data.
* ***Scientific weight***: Live weight in kg which might include scientific estimates. This can be the same as the official weight.
* ***Explain difference***: If there is a difference between the official weight and the scientific weight, it should be explained in this field. The field can be set according to according to //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1617 to e.g., “Sample data” if sampling data are used to correct the official weights, “Unallocated catches” if there is knowledge about unallocated catches, “Area misreporting” if e.g. VMS data indicates fishing in another area than officially reported or “Correction for overweight in boxes” if sampling data indicates overweight in boxes.
* ***Total landings value***: Sales value in Euro of the field official weight 'CLofficialWeight'. If necessary the estimated value can be reported. Note that the field is a String format and the options ‘NotApplicaple’ (e.g. in case of logbook registered discards) and ‘Unknown’ are available. Please report the data source in the field 'CLdataSourceOfScientificWeight'.
* ***Total number fish (optional)***: Only for Baltic salmon and trout. The total number of individual fish.

**Uncertainty indicators of estimated landings (all optional):** Where estimates are given, there should also be an uncertainty indicator, which has been made possible in the data format. The errore measures can be given for the scientific weight, landing value and number of fish (which is used for Baltic salmon and trout):

* ***Scientific weight error measure type:*** Here the type of the error measure is indicated, e.g. RSE, 90CI, 90PI. RSE: Relative Standard Error of the scientific weight/landings (Report as percentage %.) or 90CI: 90 % confidence interval or '90PI': 90 %. Upper and lower values are given in:
  + ***Scientific weight error measure value first:*** The error measure value of the scientific weight/landings e.g. Relative Standard Error, then use percentage (%). Or for 90CI or 90PI insert the **5 %** quantile. For official data: Do not fill in this field
  + ***Scientific weight error measure value second:*** The error measure value of the scientific weight/landings e.g. Relative Standard Error, then use percentage (%). Or for 90CI or 90PI insert the **95 %** quantile. For official data: Do not fill in this field
* ***Landing value error measure type:*** Here the type of the error measure is indicated, e.g. RSE, 90CI, 90PI. RSE: Relative Standard Error of the landing value (Report as percentage %.) or 90CI: 90 % confidence interval or '90PI': 90 %. Upper and lower values are given in:
  + ***Landing value error measure value first:*** The error measure value of the landing value e.g. Relative Standard Error, then use percentage (%). Or for 90CI or 90PI insert the **5 %** quantile. For official data: Do not fill in this field
  + ***Landing value error measure value second:*** The error measure value of the landing value e.g. Relative Standard Error, then use percentage (%). Or for 90CI or 90PI insert the **95 %** quantile. For official data: Do not fill in this field
* ***Number of fish error measure value type (only Baltic salmon and trout):*** Here the type of the error measure is indicated, e.g. RSE, 90CI, 90PI. RSE: Relative Standard Error of the number of fish (Report as percentage %.) or 90CI: 90 % confidence interval or '90PI': 90 %. Upper and lower values are given in:
  + ***Number of fish error measure value first:*** The error measure value of the number of fish e.g. Relative Standard Error, then use percentage (%). For official data: Do not fill in this field
  + ***Number of fish error measure value second:*** The error measure value of the number of fish e.g. Relative Standard Error, then use percentage (%).For official data: Do not fill in this field
* ***Qualitative bias***: If a quantitative RSE is not possible, a semi‐quantitative scale ranging from +++ (large overestimate) to −−− (large underestimate) can be used as in Hyder et al 2017. If the weight of landings is based on official data, use NA.

### Fields in Commercial Effort (CE) data format

The data format has been updated from the RDB to follow recommendations on effort calculations from the 2nd Workshop on Transversal Variables in Nicosia.

**Data sources:** In the dataset, it is possible to specify both official and a scientific effort estimates. In general, the official effort is given from the logbooks, but there are country specific exceptions. The scientific effort could be an estimate of the small-scale fishery based on sampling data, or it could be the official effort adjusted with e.g. VMS data, assumptions made based on sales notes or the effort is estimated based on algorithms applied to position data. To make it transparent, it has been made possible to add information on data sources in the data format. Data should not be duplicated. The data sources are given in three fields:

* ***Data type for scientific effort***: The scientific effort can be based on either official data or based on estimates. This field can be filled in according to the DataTypeOfScientificWeight vocabulary //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1620 with:

“Official”: Official data, which can be:

1) census data (e.g. control regulation data as logbooks, sales notes, declarative forms eventually combined) or

2) official sampling data

“Estimate”: Data coming from scientific estimates based on scientific sampling or scientific reevaluation and not officially registered and/or reported, as agreed in the EU-MAP (EU 2021/1167) regulation "where there is no obligation under control regulation to record these data, or where these data do not meet the coverage, resolution and/or quality requirements of the end users, alternative appropriate sampling methods shall be applied").

Dot not provide overlapping data.  
see. Commission delegated decision (EU) 2021/1167 - Chapter II, article 3  
see. Control regulation data: Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009

* ***Data source of scientific effort***: Source of the data provided in the table.  
  Census data issued from the control regulation as specified in the DataSourceOfScientificWeight vocabulary //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1619 i.e. “Logbooks”, “Sales notes”, “Other declarative forms”, “Expert evaluation” or “Combination of control regulation data”. If based on samples specify "Sampling data".
* ***Sampling scheme behind scientific effort***: If sampling data are used to estimate the scientific effort, the sampling scheme should be specified in the *Sampling scheme*. The codes for sampling scheme is maintained in the vocabulary SamplingScheme //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1664. If a sampling scheme is missing, send an email to [RDBsupport@ices.dk](mailto:RDBsupport@ices.dk) to request codes for national sampling schemes.

**Examples of use of official vs. scientific effort**

Example 1: effort data from trawler with logbook, where a combination of logbook and sales notes data are used.

Example 2: effort data from trawler with logbook, where a combination of logbook and sales notes data are used. Data on haul level is not available, and is estimated based on VMS data.

Example 3: effort for gillnet vessel with logbook, some values are estimated based on model applied to combination of logbook and AIS data.

Example 4: effort for gillnet vessel without logbook. Values are estimated based on sales notes.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Example 1** | **Example 2** | **Example 3** | **Example 4** |
| Data type of scientific effort | Official | Official | Estimate | Estimate |
| Data source of scientific effort | Combcd | Combcd | Sampld | Saln |
| Sampling scheme |  |  | EM/AIS/Questionnaire |  |
| Official days at sea | 5 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Scientific days at sea | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Official fishing days | 4 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Scientific fishing days | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Official number of hauls/sets | 8 |  |  |  |
| Scientific number of hauls/sets | 8 | 8 | 3 |  |
| Official vessel fishing hour | 20 |  |  |  |
| Scientific vessel fishing hour | 20 | 20 | 5.3 |  |
| Official soaking meter hour |  |  |  |  |
| Scientific soaking meter hour |  |  | 76800 |  |
| Gear dimension |  |  | 1600 |  |

**Number of trips**: A trip is defined as the period between a vessel departs from a port (or factory ship) and arrives at a port (or factory ship). In the case of small-scale fisheries, one landing can equal one day at sea. The number of trips are reported as both:

* Number of fraction trips: If a trip covers more than one aggregation level of the primary key, it should be split up to the primary key according to effort, following the principles agreed on the 2nd Workshop on Transversal Variables on splitting up days at sea. This field makes it possible to split the effort in the areas where there was fished.
* Number of dominant trips: The trip is assigned to the dominant aggregation within the primary key (month, métier, ICES rectangle etc.) within the trip. This field will ensure one trip only contribute with 1 to the number of (dominant) trips.

The two fields are complementary. The sum of each field should be the same when aggregated over all areas and time, it is just a way to split the effort.

A simple illustrative example of these concepts is a 3-day fishing trip using the same active gear in two different statistical rectangles. The total number of days at sea for this trip is 3, with 2 of those days having fishing activity taking place:

**Table 1 Fishing effort per day for a single trip**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **Area** | **Rectangle** | **Metier** | **Fishing Time (hours)** |
| 1 | 27.7.g | 32E2 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 5 |
| 2 | 27.7.g | 32E2 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 2 |
| 2 | 27.7.g | 31E3 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 3.5 |
| 3 | No fishing activity | | | |

We calculate the values for Days at Sea and Fishing Days for each fishing date according to the principles in Annex 5 of “Report on the 2nd workshop on transversal variables”, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8c5583fa-c360-11e6-a6db-01aa75ed71a1. In the following tables FD stands for Fishing Date, whilst GA stands for GearArea, in line with the transversal report.

First the Days at Sea are calculated for each fishing date (remembering the trip has a total of 3 days at sea):

**Table 2 Days at sea calculation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **Area** | **Rectangle** | **Metier** | **FDprop** | **Number of GAs on that date** | **GAprop** | **GAFDprop** | **Days at Sea** |
| 1 | 27.7.g | 32E2 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 0.5 | 1.5 |
| 2 | 27.7.g | 32E2 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 0.5 | 2 | 0.5 | 0.25 | 0.75 |
| 2 | 27.7.g | 31E3 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 0.5 | 2 | 0.5 | 0.25 | 0.75 |

Then the Fishing Days are calculated (remembering we only have active gear used on this trip):

**Table 3 Fishing days calculation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **Area** | **Rectangle** | **Metier** | **Number of active GAs on that date** | **GAeffort (active)** | **GAeffort (passive)** | **Fishing Days** |
| 1 | 27.7.g | 32E2 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 2 | 27.7.g | 32E2 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 2 | 0.5 | 0 | 0.5 |
| 2 | 27.7.g | 31E3 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 2 | 0.5 | 0 | 0.5 |

The number of Fractional Trips is calculated for each row as the proportion of the total Days at Sea it contributes (this is equal to the value of GAFDprop in our calculation of Days at Sea):

**Table 4 Number of fractional trips calculation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **Area** | **Rectangle** | **Metier** | **GAFDprop** | **Days at Sea** | **Number of Fractional Trips** |
| 1 | 27.7.g | 32E2 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 0.5 | 1.5 | 0.5 |
| 2 | 27.7.g | 32E2 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 0.25 | 0.75 | 0.25 |
| 2 | 27.7.g | 31E3 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 0.25 | 0.75 | 0.25 |

Note that the sum of the number of fractional trip values is equal to 1 since we are considering a single trip.

Now we can aggregate the fishing effort by area, rectangle, and métier and also calculate the number of dominant trips – the row with the most Days at Sea now has the value of 1 for the number of dominant trips. Only a single row within the trip can be allocated as the dominant trip – if you have multiple rows with the same value for days at sea then you should use a consistent method to break the tie e.g. use the tied row with the highest value for fishing days or fishing time as the dominant trip.

**Table 5 Fishing effort for example trip aggregated by area, rectangle, and metier**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Statistical Rectangle** | **Metier** | **Fishing Time (hours)** | **Days at Sea** | **Fishing Days** | **Number of Fractional Trips** | **Number of Dominant Trips** |
| 27.7.g | 32E2 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 7 | 2.25 | 1.5 | 0.75 | 1 |
| 27.7.g | 31E3 | OTB\_DEF\_70-99\_0\_0 | 3.5 | 0.75 | 0.5 | 0.25 | 0 |

Note that sum of the number of fractional trips equals the sum of the number of dominant trips (in this example 1).

For full details of the calculations for days at sea and fishing days please read Annex 5 from the “Report on the 2nd workshop on transversal variables, Nicosia, Cyprus, 22-26 February 2016 : a DCF ad-hoc workshop” <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8c5583fa-c360-11e6-a6db-01aa75ed71a1>

**Effort measures:** A number of effort measures: Days at Sea, Fishing Days, Number of hauls/sets, Vessel fishing hours, Soaking meter hours, kW Days at Sea, kW Fishing Days, kW Fishing Hours can be reported with both Official and Scientific values. They can be equal, but in some cases scientific estimates can be reallocated (e.g. based on VMS data), or in the case of small scale fisheries, they can be based on other data sources, and for some effort variables, it could be estimated based on algorithms applied to position data. In general, official effort can be considered what is reported in logbooks, and scientific effort can be based on estimates, e.g., from sales notes or position data.

The Soaking meter hours is used for passive gears as the total meters of net multiplied with the number of hours the gear is fishing. The field is optional, as it is not always known.

The Vessel fishing hours is used for active gears, but can also be used for the handling of passive gears. It is an optional field that can be based on logbook registrations, or VMS data.

The official data on Soaking meter hours, Vessel fishing hours and Number of hauls/sets might be only partially informed (especially for vessels under 10 meters that does not have logbooks with start and end time and is sometimes not filled in), but the scientific estimates should be for the full aggregation level. Information from VMS/AIS, sampling programmes and questionnaires might help informing the variables.

The field Gear dimension is dependent on the gear code in the specified Metier level 6. If longlines, the unit is number of hooks, if pots or traps, the unit is number of pots or traps, if gillnets, the unit is total length of nets (m).

Example of how the official and scientific effort variables are used (M=mandatory, O=optional):

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Effort field** | **Official effort where logbook is available** | **Official effort where logbook is not available** | **Scientific effort where logbook is available** | **Scientific effort where logbook is not available** |
| Days at sea (M) | Logbook arrival time – departure time divided by 24 and rounded up to integer | 0 | Logbook arrival time – departure time divided by 24 and rounded up to integer | Based on sales notes. 1 sale note (vessel id+date) = 1 day at sea |
| Fishing days (M) | Logbook number of catch dates | 0 | Logbook number of catch dates | Based on sales notes. 1 sale note (vessel id+date) = 1 fishing day |
| Number of hauls/sets (O) | Based on logbook registration of hauls if reported. |  | Based on logbook registration of hauls if reported.  If logbooks are available but not reported by haul, it is set to 1 for each logbook id+catch date+ICES rectangle. | If logbooks are not available (SSF) the scientific number of hauls are set to 1 for each sales note (vessel id+date) |
| Vessel fishing hour (O) | If logbook reporting is by haul, the official vessel fishing hour can be calculated from start and end of haul time. |  | If logbook reporting is by haul, the official vessel fishing hour can be calculated from start and end of haul time. | If position data are available (VMS/AIS/EM) the fishing hours can be estimated using e.g., a speed filter. |
| Soaking meter hour (O) | If total net length and soaking time is reported in the logbooks, the soaking meter hour can be calculated. |  | If total net length and soaking time is reported in the logbooks, the soaking meter hour can be calculated. | If high-resolution position data are available (AIS/EM), methods can be developed to estimate net length and soaking time (see ICES WKSSFGEO2). |

**Number of unique vessels:** Number of the active unique vessels within the aggregation level. The sum of unique vessels will be much higher than the actual number of unique vessels for the country, because one vessel can be counted many times if fishing in several months, statistical rectangles etc. This number should not aggregated, but can be used to know if data are confidential (individual vessels can be identified) or can published.

**Uncertainty indicators of estimated effort:** Where estimates are given, there should also be an *uncertainty indicator, which has been made possible in the data format:*

* *Effort RSE*: Relative Standard Error of the estimated effort. For official data: NA.
* *Qualitative Bias*: For estimated data, a semi‐quantitative scale ranging from +++ (large overestimate) to −−− (large underestimate) can be used as in Hyder et al 2017.

**Confidentiality flag (O)**: A confidentiality flag has been added to the CE format to be used for national confidentiality rules.

### Common fields for CE and CL data

This describes some fields that have been added in both the CL and CE data formats:

**Metier 6 fishing activity**: This is the DCF métier codes //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1647. Information, documentation, reference lists and scripts have been developed by the RCG ISSG on Metier issues and can be found here: <https://github.com/ices-eg/RCGs/tree/master/Metiers>.

**Data source of statistical rectangle**: See vocabulary [StatRecSource](http://vocab.ices.dk/?codetypeguid=07c5eed8-3c52-4580-9a9c-9036d5ff40e6). The field has been added as a quality indicator of the spatial information in the data. In some cases, the statistical rectangle is corrected based on position data, and in the small-scale fishery, it is sometimes estimated based on e.g. harbour location.

**Vessel Length Category:** The vessel length categories are specified in the ICES vocabulary vesselLengthClass //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1725 (where Deprecated=False). Below are some guidelines for cases where the exact vessel lengths for some segments of the data is not known.

Usually the specific vessels that data relates to is known and can be categorized in the groups specified in the vesselLengthClass code list. However, there can be cases where this is not possible e.g. if official estimates of landings from all vessels under 10m are available then it is not possible to correctly categorise them using the VesselLengthCategory code list. There are two distinct cases to consider:

* Case 1: The vessel lengths that the landings or effort data relates to are unknown. In this case use the "NK" value from the vesselLengthClass code list.
* Case 2: Some knowledge of the vessel length are available, but that information does not fit with the vesselLengthClass values (e.g. knowledge that all vessels are under 10m). In this case choose the highest category from VesselLengthClass that is less than the largest vessel length in your data e.g. if your data all comes from under 10m vessel then use the VL0810 category, or if your data all comes from under 12m vessels then use the VL1012 category.

**Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (optional):** Indicating if the exclusive economic zone of effort or landings. The codes are specified in the vocabulary ISO\_3166 http://vocab.ices.dk/?ref=337. It is possible to specifiy EU and international waters. The field is optional, but if data should be used for the FDI data call, it need to be reported.

**Exclusive Economic Zone Indicator (EEZI) (optional)**: Indicating if the landings or effort are from EU waters (EU), UK waters (UK), International waters (RFMO) or non EU coastal waters (COAST). The field is optional, but if data should be used for the FDI data call, it need to be reported.

**Incidental by-catch mitigation device**: //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1680. These can be coded as “[AttAcoustic](javascript:__doPostBack('ctl00$MainContent$myResultControl$tbResults$ct1680$ct1680$ct1680$ctl02$btCode','')) “ for “Acoustic Detterrent Device (ADD) attached to gear”, “[AttAltProf](javascript:__doPostBack('ctl00$MainContent$myResultControl$tbResults$ct1680$ct1680$ct1680$ctl03$btCode',''))“ for “Gear attachment designed to alter fishing profile to reduce bycatch”, “[ModEscPan](javascript:__doPostBack('ctl00$MainContent$myResultControl$tbResults$ct1680$ct1680$ct1680$ctl10$btCode',''))“ for “Gear modified to include escape panel” and “Unknown” or “None” etc. To support data for by catch.

**Fishing Technique (optional)**: This is an optional field to be used if the data are to be exported to the EU FDI datacall. It is the Fishing Technique codes defined for the EU AER Fleet Economic data call, and is also used by the EU FDI data call. The codes are specified in the vocabulary FishingTechnique //vocab.ices.dk/?ref=1612. From the FDI data call documentation on the field: The codes used are the same codes used in the DCF fleet socio-economic data call. The fishing technique should be calculated at the vessel\*year level and each vessel\*year must then be assigned only to one fishing technique in response to the data call; therefore, if a vessel operated using more than one fishing technique, a dominance criterion must be applied. The fishing technique should be assigned to the vessel taking into account all its fishing activity during the year.

**Dep Sea Regulation**: This is an optional field to be used if the data should be export to the EU FDI data call. It is an indicator with options “Yes” or “No” if the fishery is under the deep sea regulation. From the FDI documentation on the field: A fishing trip must be marked as a *deep fishing trip* (using the DEEP variable) when the catch of deep sea species exceeds 100 kg. The deep species to be considered are described in the following EU regulations: for data up to and including 2016 the deep-sea species to be considered are listed in the Annex I of the regulation (EC) 2347/2002 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32002R2347); for data from 2017 the deep-sea species to be considered are listed in the Annex I of the regulation (EU) 2016/2336 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016R2336>).

**Encrypted Vessel Ids (M)**: To be able to count the number of vessels, across e.g. month and ICES rectangles, it has been decided to add a string of encrypted vessel id’s (e.g. numbered 1, 2, 3 etc.) to the CE and CL data. This can also be useful for confidentiality reasons, if e.g. it is decided to mark records with less than 3 vessels as confidential after data have been aggregated. The string of encrypted vessel ids should be separated by a semicolon “;”. The encrypted vessel id should be the same unique id for a vessel throughout each year. But these encrypted vessel ids do not have to be the same as in the Encrypted Vessel Code field in the Vessel Detail (VD) table.

**FDI fields**

The following FDI fields are included in the unique key for the data model for CL and CE: Mesh size range, Supra Region, Geographical indicator and Specific conditions to technical measures.

# Description of each table

## Upper hierarchy

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Upper hierarchy table** | **Description** | **be aware** |
| Design table  (DE) | This table holds the information about the sampling scheme and stratification thereof. Further it specifies the upper hierarchy, which is unique for a given combination of sampling scheme and stratification. |  |
| Temporal Event (TE) | If one of the sampling units is some kind of time e.g., minute, week or quarter, then this is where to put the information about the selection. |  |
| Location  (LO) | If one of the sampling units is a location, then this is where to put the information about the selection. | The location refers to a place with LOCODE. |
| Vessel Selection  (VS) | If one of the sampling units is a vessel, then this is where to put the information about the selection. | This table is only used when the vessel is part of your sampling hierarchy. Information relating to the vessel properties can be found in Vessel Details (VD) table. |
| Fishing Trip  (FT) | This table holds information about the fishing trip.  Definition: Any voyage of a fishing vessel during which fishing activities are intended that starts at the moment when the fishing vessel leaves a port and ends on arrival in port. | Fishing activity does not necessarily imply catch. When observers are deployed on trips that e.g., do not register catch they should also be logged into the RDBES (e.g., gill net trips that only deploy the gear; purse-seine trips that search and do not find any fish) |
| Fishing Operation  (FO) | This table holds information about the fishing operation – it is very similar to the HH in the present RDB aggregated by haul.  Definition: set/haul |  |
| On-shore Event (OS) | If one of the sampling units is a combination of Location and Time, then this is where to put the information about the selection.  Definition: Location\*time - e.g. port-day, market-day, auction-day and factory-day. |  |
| Landing Event  (LE) | This table holds information about the landing event - it is very similar to the HH in the present RDB aggregated by trip, but it is not assumed that one is sampling from all the landings of a fishing trip because there may be e.g. landings and sales taking place elsewhere.  Definition: Landings from a fishing trip or part thereof. | A fishing trip may register several landing events (e.g., land in two different ports). A landing event may be the product of several consecutive fishing trips made by a vessel. Landing event can also contain multiple gears and areas, in the table the dominant gear and area is use. |
| Species Selection (SS) | This table holds information about the selection of species expected in the Sample (SA) table e.g., only species from a national species list are sampled, full concurrent species sampling, probabilistic species selection from a species group. | This table is mandatory. |
| Sample  (SA) | This table holds outcome of the sampling done in the upper hierarchy, i.e. the final sample of fish available for measurement or biological analyses. It is very similar to the SL in the present RDB. | This table is ‘Self-referring’: a single Sample (SA) table holds one level of subsampling, but it is possible to add more levels of subsampling by linking one Sample (SA) table to another with SAparentID. |

## Auxiliary tables

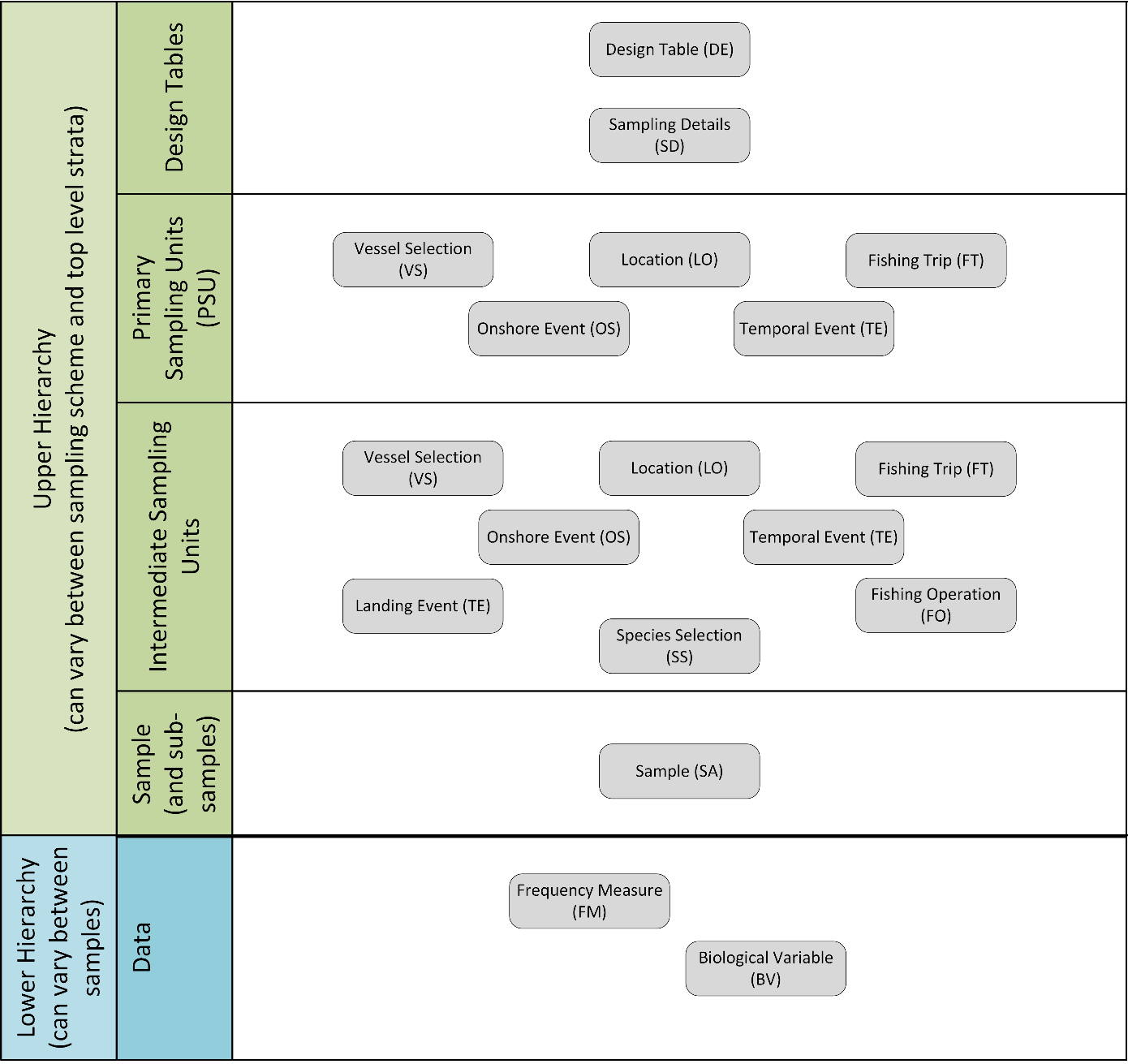
|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Upper hierarchy auxiliary table** | **Description** | ***be aware*** |
| Sampling details (SD) | This table holds information on the sampling country and institute. | This table is mandatory. |
| Vessel details (VD) | This table holds information about the vessel properties e.g. homeport and vessel length | This table is mandatory. There are codes for unknown vessel if the vessel is truly unknown. |
| Species List Details (SL) | This table holds information about the list of species which are targeted during a sampling event. | This table is mandatory. |

## Lower hierarchy tables

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Lower hierarchy table** | **Description** | **be aware** |
| Frequency Measure (FM) | This table holds the length distribution of the subsample from Sample (SA) – very similar to the HL in the present RDB format. | This table holds the length distribution of the smallest subsample from the Sample table (SA). |
| Biological Variable  (BV) | This table holds the biological measurement done on individual fish e.g., weight, age, maturity and stock. The measurements are very similar to the ones in the CS in the present RDB with added information about the selection, but the table has been transposed, so each line holds a single measurement.  This facilitates adding new variables and allows for different protocols for selecting individual fish for different measurements e.g., age sampling may be length stratified, but weight sampling may not. Further it also makes it much easier to add new measurement types in the future. | The Single fish number (id) (BVfishId) is what links the different measurements on a single fish together.  Before the CA table in the present RDB was always linked to the TR table. The link is now specified by the upper and lower hierarchy. |

# Hierarchy Summary

The following diagram shows how the tables relate to the different levels of sampling units and the division between the Upper and Lower Hierarchies – the Vessel Details and Species List Details tables are omitted for clarity. As can be seen there is some duplication between the tables in the Primary Sampling Unit section and the Intermediate Sampling Unit section – this is because in some of the hierarchies a table might appear as a primary sampling unit whilst in others it might be an intermediate sampling unit.



The following tables show a summary of the tables that appear in each of the upper and lower hierarchies. More details can be found in the worked examples in Annex I and in the hierarchy spreadsheet.

## Table 1 Upper hierarchies

Only mandatory records are shown for the hierarchies below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Hierarchy 1** | **Hierarchy 2** | **Hierarchy 3** | **Hierarchy 4** | **Hierarchy 5** | **Hierarchy 6** | **Hierarchy 7** | **Hierarchy**  **8** | **Hierarchy 9** | **Hierarchy**  **10** |
| **Design** | **Design** | **Design** | **Design** | **Design** | **Design** | **Design** | **Design** | **Design** | **Design** |
| **Sampling Details** | **Sampling Details** | **Sampling Details** | **Sampling Details** | **Sampling Details** | **Sampling Details** | **Sampling details** | **Sampling details** | **Sampling details** | **Sampling details** |
| **Vessel Selection** | **Fishing Trip** | **Temporal Event** | **On-shore** | **On-shore** | **On-shore** | **On-shore** | **Temporal Event** | **Landing location** | **Vessel Selection** |
| **Fishing Trip** | **Fishing Operation** | **Vessel Selection** | **Fishing Trip** | **Landing Event** | **Fishing Trip** | **Species Selection** | **Vessel Selection** | **Temporal event** | **Temporal Event** |
| **Fishing Operation** | **Species Selection** | **Fishing Trip** | **Landing Event** | **Species Selection** | **Fishing Operation (a)** | **Landing Event (b)** | **Landing Event** | **Species selection** | **Fishing Trip** |
| **Species Selection** | **Sample** | **Fishing Operation** | **Species Selection** | **Sample** | **Species Selection** | **Sample** | **Species selection** | **Sample** | **Fishing Operation** |
| **Sample** |  | **Species Selection** | **Sample** |  | **Sample** |  | **Sample** | **Landing Event (b)** | **Species Selection** |
|  |  | **Sample** |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Sample** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Hierarchy 11** | **Hierarchy**  **12** | **Hierarchy 13** |
| **Design** | **Design** | **Design** |
| **Sampling details** | **Sampling details** | **Sampling details** |
| **Location** | **Location** | **Fishing Operation** |
| **Temporal Event** | **Temporal Event** | **Species Selection** |
| **Fishing Trip** | **Landing Event** | **Sample** |
| **Landing Event** | **Species Selection** |  |
| **Species Selection** | **Sample** |  |
| **Sample** |  |  |
|  |  |  |

(a) only FOaggregationLevel ==T

(b) LE is not a part of the estimation hierarchy, please see annex for the specific hierarchy 7 and 9.

## Vessel Details and Species List

The Vessel Details have to be uploaded into a separate table before the different hierarchies can be uploaded. Then the Vessel Selection should just refer to the Vessel Details through the Encrypted Vessel Code. Other tables/records like e.g. Fishing Trip and Landing Event should also just refer to the Vessel Details

The Species List also have to be uploaded into a separate table before the different hierarchies can be uploaded. Then the Species Selection should just refer to the Species List name.

## Upload order of the record types

Vessel Details, VD, and Species List, SL have to **be uploaded before the hierarchies** can be uploaded.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| H[all] | H[all] |
| VD | SL |

The following are the import orders of the record types in the RDBES data file by hierarchy. In the column header the ‘H’ stands for hierarchy, directly followed by the hierarchy number.

‘-‘ (minus after the record type) means mandatory but not in the estimation hierarchy.

‘()’ (the record type in brackets) means optional and not in the estimation hierarchy.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| H1 | H2 | H3 | H4 | H5 | H6 | H7 | H8 | H9 | H10 | H11 | H12 | H13 |
| DE | DE | DE | DE | DE | DE | DE | DE | DE | DE | DE | DE | DE |
| SD- | SD- | SD- | SD- | SD- | SD- | SD- | SD- | SD- | SD- | SD- | SD- | SD- |
| VS | FT | TE | OS | OS | OS | OS | TE | LO | VS | LO | LO | FO |
| FT | FO | VS | FT | LE | FT | SS | VS | TE | TE | TE | TE | (FT) |
| FO | SS | FT | LE | (FT) | (LE) | LE- | LE | SS | FT | FT | LE | SS |
| SS | SA | FO | SS | SS | FO | SA | (FT) | SA | FO | LE- | (FT) | SA |
| SA |  | SS | SA | SA | SS |  | SS | LE- | SS | SS | SS |  |
|  |  | SA |  |  | SA |  | SA |  | SA | SA | SA |  |

The hierarchies here are comparable with the design classes in WKPICS 2013

The WKPICS design classes A, B and C below does not refer to the A, B, C and D in the lower hierarchies in table 2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Hierarchy 1** | **Hierarchy 2** | **Hierarchy 3** | **Hierarchy 4** | **Hierarchy 5** | **Hierarchy 6** | **Hierarchy 7** | **Hierarchy 8** | **Hierarchy 9** | **Hierarchy 10** | **Hierarchy 11** | **12** | **Hierarchy**  **13** |
| **Design class (WKPICS, 2013)** | **B** | **A** | **Not defined** | **C** | **C** | **C** | **C** | **Not defined** | **D** | **B** | **D** | **D** | **Not defined** |

## Table 2 Lower hierarchies

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Lower Hierarchy A** | **Lower Hierarchy B** | **Lower Hierarchy C** | **Lower Hierarchy D** |
| **Tables in the lower hierarchy** | Frequency Measure | Frequency Measure | Biological Variable |  |
| Biological Variable |  |  |  |

Typically each of an Institute’s sampling designs will be mapped to a single Upper Hierarchy. For example an institute might determine that Upper Hierarchy 1 is the best match for its sampling-at-sea programme. Although the samples from this programme are all recorded using the same Upper Hierarchy they can actually use different Lower Hierarchies if required. This can be relevant if there are different ways of recording length frequency data and biological data within a sampling programme – for example, length data might be recorded at the haul level whilst biological measurements are recorded at the trip level. In this case the samples that are linked to individual hauls could use Lower Hierarchy B (which just stores length data) whilst those samples that are linked to the trip level could use Lower Hierarchy C (which just stores biological data). This could also be relevant if length frequencies are taken on all species, but biological measurement are only taken on a specific group of species, these species will then have Lower Hierarchy A while the others will have Lower Hierarchy B.

# Overwriting rules for data upload

**Commercial Landing and Effort data**

For data corrections for Commercial Landing and Effort data, data will be overwritten with the latest data upload with a combination of all the key fields:

* See all key fields for CL and CE

**Vessel Details**

For data corrections for Vessel Details, VD, the following combination of fields will overwrite previous uploaded data:

* Sampling country
* Year

**Species List**

For data corrections for Species List, SL, the following combination of fields will overwrite previous uploaded data:

* Country
* Year
* CatchFraction
* SpeciesListName

**Sample data**

Sample data in the hierarchies will be overwritten with the latest combination of the following common fields:

* DEsamplingScheme
* DEyear
* DEstratumName
* DEhierarchy
* SDcountry
* SDinstitution

Data below the specified fields will be overwritten with new uploaded data. This means that data is not add to the RDBES, if a file with the specified fields are uploaded again. If data needs to be added under an already uploaded combination of the specified fields. Then the previously uploaded data have to be in the new file together with the new data with the same combination of the specified fields.

That means that if data A for a given; sampling scheme, year, stratum name, hierarchy, country and institution have been uploaded in a file. Then the following week data B should be added to the RDBES. Then a new file with both data A and data B have to be in the new uploaded file to have both data A and data B in the RDBES. If only data B is uploaded in a new file only data B will be in the RDBES.

# The design variables and hierarchies

## Design variables (applies to all tables that are part of hierarchies)

The RDBES makes a strong push towards the specification of the core variables needed to describe the sampling and carry out design-based estimation. Those variables are termed Design Variables and are identified in the data model with the acronym “DV”. Among the mandatory Design Variables (DV, M) are essential aspects of the design like stratification, clustering and selection methods. Optional Design Variables (DV, O) include aspects that, albeit essential for design-based estimation, are frequently not available in more ad-hoc designs such as the total number of units, the number of units sampled or the probability of inclusion.

## Sampling hierarchies (applies to Design Table; Sample Table)

The designs used in the sampling of commercial fisheries in ICES waters are mostly, if not all, multi-stage. In multi-stage designs the final sample (e.g., the fish sampled) is selected through a set of stages where the sampling units at each stage are (sub-) sampled from the (larger) units chosen at the previous stage.

In the RDBES the **sampling hierarchy** is a set of instructions that indicates what sampling levels are included in the multi-stage sampling of the commercial catches and how they are (hierarchically) related to each other. In a sampling hierarchy each level of a multi-stage sampling design is represented by a hierarchy table that holds the units sampled and details on how that sampling was done. The RDBES is very flexible with regards to the sampling levels that can be included in a hierarchy, allowing for a wide variety of sampling units to be specified such as ports, vessels, trips, fishing operations, time, amongst other. The kind of sampling units supported are distilled from analyses of commercial sampling programs by a range of ICES expert groups and workshops. Less common sampling units are not supported with designated tables, but may be modelled through the use of columns that describe clustered sampling (see Section “The new design variables”).

The sampling hierarchies are fundamental to the RDBES data model because they determine which information each country should upload to it. Two types of sampling hierarchies must be defined for each sampling programme. An **upper hierarchy** – defined in the “Design table” and that includes the upper levels of the design from “programme” to “fish sample”. A **lower hierarchy** – defined in the “Sample Table” and that respects to the lower levels of the design, i.e., from “fish sample” downwards to length measurements and/or biological analyses carried out at the level of individuals.

## Samples (applies to all tables that are part of hierarchies)

In the hierarchy tables of the RDBES a row represents a unit sampled at that level of the hierarchy. E.g., in the port table, each row represents a port sampled; in the vessel table each row represents a vessel sampled; and so on. Consequently the number of rows in each hierarchy table generally corresponds to the number of elements in the sample taken from that level. An exception occurs when one or more strata were not sampled (see *stratification*).

## Total units and Sampled units (applies to all tables that are part of hierarchies)

All tables involved in the hierarchies defined in the RDBES include columns for total units and sampled units - named numberTotal and numberSampled in all table with table name as prefix e.g. VSnumberTotal and VSnumberSampled in the Vessel Selection table. In general, the total column is defined as the total number of sampling units in that sampling stage; and the sampled column is defined as the number of units sampled in that sampling stage. In the case of stratification (see *stratification*) the totals and sampled respect to the total size and sample size of each stratum (see example 1 below). In the case of clustering (see *clustering*), total and sampled columns refer to the total and sampled number of units in each cluster *and* two new variables are used numberTotalClusters and numberSampledClusters (also prefixed with table name) that indicate the total (in the population) and sampled number of clusters. In the particular case of Selection method = “census” total and sampled are equal.

## Stratification (applies to all tables that are part of hierarchies)

A column is included in every hierarchy table that allows the presence of stratification at each sampling level to be declared - named stratification in all table with table name as prefix e.g. VSstratification in the Vessel Selection table. When stratification exists, the strata names are declared in the stratum column (also prefixed with table name).

The vast majority of strata considered in the sampling of commercial fisheries have known size and are composed of countable units. Accordingly when stratification is implemented the tables of the RDBES require the specification of a) the total size of each stratum and b) the size of the sample is known. This is necessary because each unit sampled is only meaningful when related to the size of the stratum size and the sample it came from. Additionally it is important that every stratum is sampled (examples 1a and 1b).

In the RDBES stratum total and sample size values are expressed as a number of sampling units (e.g., number of vessels in the stratum and number of vessels sampled from that stratum). Depending on the table, other common units of strata size may also be available (e.g., weight).

**Example 1a: Simplified example of unstratified vessel table. 7 samples were taken from the entire (non-stratified) population of vessels. Compare with 1b (stratified).**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **VSid** | **VSstratification** | **VSstratum** | **VSselectionMethod** | **VSnumberTotal** | **VSnumberSampled** | **VSsampled** | **VSreasonNotSampled** |
| 1 | N | U | SRSWOR | 1700 | 7 | Y |  |
| 2 | N | U | SRSWOR | 1700 | 7 | Y |  |
| 3 | N | U | SRSWOR | 1700 | 7 | Y |  |
| 4 | N | U | SRSWOR | 1700 | 7 | Y |  |
| 5 | N | U | SRSWOR | 1700 | 7 | Y |  |
| 6 | N | U | SRSWOR | 1700 | 7 | Y |  |
| 7 | N | U | SRSWOR | 1700 | 7 | Y |  |

**Example 1b: Simplified example of stratification by vessel size. In this case the aim of the sampling scheme was to estimate catches at fleet-level (i.e., for all vessel sizes). Note that for all strata, stratum totals and sample sizes are reported and that 3 samples were taken from stratum <10m and two from the remainder two strata (>=10 <15m and >=15m). Compare with 1a (no stratification).**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **VSid** | **VSstratification** | **VSstratum** | **VSselectionMethod** | **VSnumberTotal** | **VSnumberSampled** | **VSsampled** | **VSreasonNotSampled** |
| 1 | Y | <10m | SRSWOR | 1000 | 3 | Y |  |
| 2 | Y | <10m | SRSWOR | 1000 | 3 | Y |  |
| 3 | Y | <10m | SRSWOR | 1000 | 3 | Y |  |
| 4 | Y | >=10 <15m | SRSWOR | 500 | 2 | Y |  |
| 5 | Y | >=10 <15m | SRSWOR | 500 | 2 | Y |  |
| 6 | Y | >=15m | SRSWOR | 200 | 2 | Y |  |
| 7 | Y | >=15m | SRSWOR | 200 | 2 | Y |  |

Guidelines for reporting stratification in RDBES:

* All strata included in the sampling frame of a particular sampling stage must be reported *even if they have not been sampled*. When a stratum has not been sampled it is reported as a line where selection method = “not-sampled” and sample size = 0.
  + E.g.:
    - if your 1st sampling level is Vessel and the goal of your sampling scheme is to obtain data to estimate size composition for the entire catch of your country (i.e., all vessels) by using a vessel list stratified by vessel-size then all vessel size strata should be declared; In this case if size-class [>=15m] was not sampled it should be reported with selection method = “not-sampled” and sample = 0 (see example 2). The estimations for [>=15m] will be estimated from other samples

**Example 2: Simplified example of stratification by vessel size with no samples taken in one stratum (>=15m). Compare with example 1 (stratified, all strata sampled) and 3.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **VSid** | **VSstratification** | **VSstratum** | **VSselectionMethod** | **VSnumberTotal** | **VSnumberSampled** | **VSsampled** | **VSreasonNotSampled** |
| 1 | Y | <10m | SRSWOR | 1000 | 3 | Y |  |
| 2 | Y | <10m | SRSWOR | 1000 | 3 | Y |  |
| 3 | Y | <10m | SRSWOR | 1000 | 3 | Y |  |
| 4 | Y | >=10 <15m | SRSWOR | 500 | 2 | Y |  |
| 5 | Y | >=10 <15m | SRSWOR | 500 | 2 | Y |  |
| **6** | **Y** | **>=15m** | **NotSampled** | **200** | **0** | **N** | **Other (e.g.)** |

* When some components of the target population of each sampling level in RDBES are excluded from the sampling frame, they should be declared and, whenever possible, also quantified.
  + E.g.:
    - If the study population of the sampling programme is vessels <15 m i.e., a strata for >=15 m should also be declared and, if possible, quantified (see example 3) so this can be taken into account during estimation.

**Example 3: Simplified example of stratification by vessel size where one strata is out-of-frame (<10 m) and therefore does not need to be declared. Compare with example 2 where the VSid 6 with strata >=15 is in-frame but not sampled.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **VSid** | **VSstratification** | **VSstratum** | **VSselectionMethod** | **VSnumberTotal** | **VSnumberSampled** | **VSsampled** | **VSreasonNotSampled** |
| 1 | Y | <10m | SRSWOR | 1000 | 3 | Y |  |
| 2 | Y | <10m | SRSWOR | 1000 | 3 | Y |  |
| 3 | Y | <10m | SRSWOR | 1000 | 3 | Y |  |
| 4 | Y | >=10 <15m | SRSWOR | 500 | 2 | Y |  |
| 5 | Y | >=10 <15m | SRSWOR | 500 | 2 | Y |  |
| **6** | **Y** | **>=15m** | **NotApplicable** | **200** | **0** | **N** | **OutOfFrame** |

* Note that in the sampling table, besides the stratum column, many other commonly observed variables are defined some of which are sometimes used to stratify fractions of the catch (e.g., size category); However, following a similar procedure to all other tables, it is important that the full stratification is declared in the stratum column as this will be the one considered for effects of partitioning the population (see Example 4). Also, in agreement with the general stratification guidelines (see above) all size categories present (e.g., in a landing) should be reported in the sample table even if they were not sampled *but* size categories absent from that landing need not be reported (see Example 4).

**Example 4: Simplified example of stratification in the sample table. Note that stratum indicates stratification was based on Commercial size category but not on presentation; and that only 4 size categories were actually present in the landing. Other Commercial size category (e.g., 5, 6) were absent from the landings.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SAid** | **SAcatch-**  **Fraction** | **SAspecies-**  **Code** | **SAstratum** | **SAcomm-**  **SizeCat** | **SApresen-**  **tation** | **SAnumberTotal** | **SAnumberSampled** |
| 1 | Lan | 126436 | Size 1 | Size 1 | Whole | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | Lan | 126436 | Size 2 | Size 2 | Gutted | 5 | 2 |
| 3 | Lan | 126436 | Size 3 | Size 3 | Gutted | 10 | 2 |
| 4 | Lan | 126436 | Size 4 | Size 4 | Gutted | 30 | 2 |

## Clustering: One stage and Two stage cluster sampling (applies to all tables that are part of upper hierarchies, except sample)

The RDBES can accommodate several types of one- and two-stage cluster sampling of, e.g., clusters of ports within geographical regions, clusters of weekdays within months or quarters, vessels, etc. The specification of cluster sampling in the RDBES follows the same line of reasoning as the specification of stratified sampling and both can be combined to accurately represent the way sampling units are actually selected. The difference is that when clustering is declared an additional total and sample value has to be specified that represents the total and sampled number of clusters (e.g. LOnumberTotalClusters, LOnumberSampledClusters). Several detailed examples of different types of 1-stage and 2-stage cluster sampling can be found in Annex VI. Note: the cluster sampling of units present in some tables of the RDBES is similar in nature to the cluster sampling already represented in the multi-stage nature of the upper hierarchies. Users are directed to explore first the possibility of representing the clustered nature of their design by the hierarchies already available; and only make use of the within-table cluster option in the cases where the clustered nature of their design cannot be represented otherwise (e.g., a succession of temporal event tables (TE) would be needed, such as when months are randomly selected and then weeks selected within months; a succession of location tables (LO) would be needed, such as when regions are randomly selected and then markets selected within regions). See more details in annex VI.

## Selection and inclusion probabilities (applies to all tables that are part of hierarchies)

Each table of an RDBES hierarchy contains four probability columns, SelectionProb, InclusionProb, SelectionProbCluster and InclusionProbCluster. These columns should hold the specific selection and inclusion probabilities of each row/sampled unit. These probabilities are fundamental for design base estimations and not always can they be estimated from number sampled (numberSampled - n) and total number (numberTotal - N), see annex V.

## Sample selection methods (applies to all tables that are part of hierarchies)

The RDBES allows data-submitters to specify the selection method they used when selecting samples in selectionMethod, see annex VII for detailed definitions, examples and use

The following methods can be specified:

i) Probability selection methods: the selection of the units is based on the theory of probability - the probability of any set of units being selected is known at any stage of the operation of selection.

* + - * **Simple Random Sampling With Replacement (SRSWR):** random sampling of equally probable elements with replacement.
* **Simple Random Sampling Without Replacement (SRSWOR):** Simple random sampling of equally probable elements without replacement.
  + - * **Unequal Probability Sampling With Replacement (UPSWR):** random sampling of unequally probable elements with replacement.
      * **Unequal Probability Sampling Without Replacement (UPSWOR):** random sampling of unequally probable elements without replacement.
* **Systematic Sampling Without replacement (SYSS):** Sample is obtained by a systematic method (as opposed to random choice) with a random starting point and without replacement. E.g., sampling from a list by taking units that are at equally spaced intervals.
* **Census (CENSUS)**: the sample corresponds to the full set of units in the population

ii) Non-probability selection methods: the selection of units is based on factors other than random chance, e.g., convenience, prior experience, voluntary registration, or the judgement of a researcher.

* **Non-Probabilistic Quasi Simple Random Sampling Without Replacement (NPQSRSWOR):** The selection is considered to approximate a random selection without replacement.
* **Non-Probabilistic Quasi Simple Random Sampling With Replacement (NPQSRSWR):** The selection is considered to approximate a random selection with replacement.
* **Non-Probabilistic Quasi Systematic Sampling (NPQSYSS):** The selection is considered approximate a systematic sample.
* **Non-Probabilistic Judgement Sampling (NPJS):** The selection is carried out without replacement and considered by expert judgement to include typical units of the population parameter in question.
* **Non-Probabilistic Convenience Sampling (NPCS):** The selection is not controlled by the sampler or is controlled by convenience of the sampler or by other purposes than estimating population parameters for a commercial fishery (e.g. observational data).
* **Cross-Level Quota Sampling at the Trip level (NPCLQS-T):** The selection is restricted by a quota at the trip level and not at the level where the unit is selected.
* **Cross-Level Quota Sampling at levels Other (NPCLQS-O):** The selection is restricted by a quota at a level other than a trip e.g. at the level of species, area and quarter.

iii) Other

* **Fixed Sample (FIXED):** Used for fixed sampling designs. When a sample is selected once and then reused for subsequent ocasions.
* **Unknown (Unknown):** Used in cases where selection method is not known (e.g. historical records).
* **Not Applicable (NotApplicable):** Used only when filling in the selection method of auxiliary tables (e.g., Fishing Trip table under Hierarchy 5)
* **Not sampled (NotSampled):** Used for strata that are not sampled.

## Sample Weights

The hierarchy tables of the RDBES do not incorporate sampling weights as these can be calculated from other available data (e.g., numberTotal and numberSampled if random sampling; inclusion probabilities in the case of sampling with unequal probability).

## Catch category

The Catch category is categorising the catch. But since the e.g. sea sampling is done before a catch is landed, not all the catch categories are the same for sampling data and landing data. The common categories are:

Catch categories for both sampling data and landing data:

* + ‘Lan’ – Landing
  + ‘BMS’ – Below Minimum reference Size

Sample (SA) additional Catch categories:

* + ‘Dis’ – Discard
  + ‘Catch’ – Catch (landing, BMS and discard not split)

Landing (CL) additional Catch categories:

* + ‘RegDis’ – Logbook Registered Discard

The following is an explanation of the catch categories:

**Landing, ‘Lan’**

The ‘Landing’ Catch category will cover the scientific estimates of landing, which are categorised as above minimum size. Landings does not include BMS.

**BMS Landing, ‘BMS’**

Relevant to stocks under landing obligations. The BMS landings consist of fish and crustaceans Below Minimum Size, as registered in the logbook or as estimated by fishery observers.

If it is possible to separate BMS and discards fractions when sampling from e.g. at sea observer programme, then the BMS estimate should be included. If it’s not possible to separate discard and BMS fractions, then everything will be seen as discard.

**Discard, ‘Dis’**

The ‘Discard’ Catch category will cover the discard fraction based on fishery observer estimations. This category is the part of the catch, which is thrown overboard into the sea.

Data for this fraction should be reported even when discard values are low. Discard estimations for pelagic species based on demersal observer programs should also be reported. This is especially important for some small pelagic stocks.

**Catch, ‘Catch’**

When landing, BMS and discard are not split, it is possible to use the Catch category ‘Catch’ for the combined catch.

**Logbook Registered Discard, ‘RegDis’**

This component corresponds to discards which are registered in the logbook.

### Catch categories – under Sample SA

Sampling Catch categories are shown below. A sample of the catch can potentially be split in the following Catch categories; Landing, BMS and Discard should be sum to the total catch and should therefore not be overlapping.

If a catch does not contain a BMS landing part, then the BMS catch category should be ignored.

**Sampling of catch can be split in the following Catch categories.**

**Sampling of a catch can be split in**

**Landing**

Landed catch categorised as above minimum size

**BMS** **landing** Landed catch categorised as below minimum size, BMS.

**Discard**

From sea observers

**Catch**

Landing, discard and BMS is or cannot be split

OR

### Catch categories – under Commercial Landing CL

Landing Catch categories are shown below. A landing can be split in the following Catch categories, which should sum to the total registered catch and should there for not be overlapping.

**A registered catch can be split in the following Catch categories.**

**A registered catch can be split in**

**BMS** **landing** Landed catch categorised as below minimum size, BMS

**Landing**

Landed catch categorised as above minimum size

**Logbook Registered Discard** (including de minimis) and damaged fish

## Recording of otoliths and scales collected

All age data needs to be uploaded to the BV table including otoliths or other age structures which were collected but not read. When an otolith has been collected from a sampled fish, the code ‘OtolithCollected’ should be inserted into the field ‘BVtypeMeasured’ and a ‘Y’ for yes should be inserted in the field ‘BVvalueMeasured’ and in the field ‘BVvalueUnitOrScale’ a ‘NA’ should be inserted. In most cases the otolith or scale would be stored in an archive, but use this code irrespective. If you are not able to store this information in your national database, then the value can be estimated based on sampling protocols. This explains why the description uses the word ‘indication’.

# New features of the RDBES

## True zero values and Non-recording zero values in species sampling

Not every sampling programme always records the weights or numbers of all species found in catches: cases exist where records are only kept a subset/list of taxa and no information is recorded from the remainder; in some extreme situations a sampling plan may record data from a single species despite the multi-species nature of the fishery. Additionally, sampling programmes may not routinely record specific groups (e.g. PETS - Protected Endangered Threatened Species). Such diversity of sampling protocols greatly complicates the estimation and may lead to very significant biases in, e.g., discard rates or biodiversity measures, when data analysts cannot readily distinguish true absences of a species from its routine (or sporadic) non-recording in database records.

The RDBES provides for the accurate distinction between true absences of a species and its non-recordings by means of a Species Selection table. This table sits directly above the sample table. In it, the species sampled *and* the list of species intended to be sampled are declared for each sampling event (e.g., a landing or a fishing operation of a fishing trip). Some generic species lists are available (e.g., “all species including invertebrates”) but sampling programme specific species lists can also be specified (e.g., a list of DCF species; a list containing only cod; a port specific list).

Under concurrent sampling, SSuseCalcZero should be used like a quality indicator - If data submitter reports “Yes” then concurrent sampling will be assumed finished and zeros will be calculated for the species missing in the SA table. If data submitter reports “No” then concurrent sampling will be assumed not finished and zeros will not be added to the species in the species list that are absent from SA records. In the latter situation SSnumTotal should be reported as NA.

## Non-responses and missing values due to quota sampling

The present version of the RDBES data model is prepared to receive non-responses resulting from a variety of causes, e.g., industry refusals, observer declines, etc. Full report of these occurrences is important for estimation because in many cases they cannot be assumed to be missing at random. The main tables of the present version of the RDBES contain a noSampReason that allows users to specify the main motives for not having sampled specific units - also prefixed with table name. The aim of this column in, e.g., the Fishing Trip Table, is to allow the calculation of refusal rates; In the Sample table, it will put in evidence, e.g., when biological samples were not taken due to quotas having been reached in, e.g., previous hauls - reaching of quarterly quotas (in the Sample table).

**Example 1: Simplified example of reporting a refusal. In this case a sample of n=5 units was drawn (e.g., vessels contacted under hierarchy 1) but data could not be obtained for one of them due to a refusal. As a consequence VSid=5 will have no child entry.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **VSid** | **VSselectionMethod** | **VSnumberTotal** | **VSnumberSampled** | **VSnoSampReason** |
| 1 | random | 10 | 5 |  |
| 2 | random | 10 | 5 |  |
| 3 | random | 10 | 5 |  |
| 4 | random | 10 | 5 |  |
| 5 | random | 10 | 5 | Non-response – Industrial decline |

**Example: Simplified example of reporting of a non-sampling event due to quota being reached. In this case the cod was not biologically sampled because a quota had been reached in previous hauls. As a consequence SAid=1 will have no child entry in table Biological Variable, while SAid 2 and 3 will have child entries.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SAid** | **SAspeciesCode** | **SAnumberTotal** | **SAnumberSampled** | **SAnoSamp-**  **ReasonFM** | **SAreasonNot**  **SampledBV** |
| 1 | Cod | 10 | 2 |  | Non-response – Quota reached |
| 2 | Hake | 10 | 5 | Non-response – sampling Error |  |
| 3 | Haddock | 10 | 5 |  |  |

## Recording of incidental by-catches and slipping

The present version of the RDBES is prepared to receive the information needed to estimate incidental by-catches and record drop-outs and slipping. With regards to incidental by-catches, the aim was to a) be able to accurately record positive incidental by-catch events (e.g., by extending the range of available taxonomic codes to marine mammals and birds), b) facilitate the correct distinction between non-observations ( = missing values) and zero-observation (true 0s), c) accommodate the usage of different sampling methodologies (e.g., in by-catch studies it is frequent for observers to do a visual screening of the catch; in discard studies it is more typical for observers to collect weight-based samples) and d) be able to record the state of individuals (e.g., including codes for dead, wounded, alive, unknown, etc.). With regards to slipping and drop-outs the aim was to facilitate its reporting in a way that is clearly distinguishable from other fractions such as landings and discards. To accommodate these improvements the following changes were implemented:

* FO Table:
  + Inclusion of variable “Observation code” to indicate which part(s) of the fishing operation were effectively screened during the fishing operation. This new variable accomodates “Slipping” (Sl), “Drop-outs” (Dr), “Presorting” (Pr), “Sorting” (So) and combinations thereof.
* SS Table
  + Inclusion of a variable “Observation\_activity” (text), defined as SLIP (= SLIPPING), DROP (= DROP-OUTS), HAUL (= HAULING) and SORT (=”SORTING”). This new variable allows the specification of different species lists for the different parts of the fishing operation, i.e., it is possible for some species to be screened for only at cod-end or different taxonomic levels to be used in observations of slipping and sorting of the catches.
  + Inclusion of a variable “Observation type” (integer), defined as vol (= volume) and vis (= visual). This new variable allows for the consideration of different species lists in volume samples from those used in visual screening samples, ensuring the separation of the estimates obtained by the two different methods.
* SA Table
  + Inclusion of a variable “SpecimenState” with a code list specifying the state of the individuals in the sample (e.g., dead, damaged).

Examples of how these new variables can be specified are present in annex IV of this report.

## Non-responses collected field

To be able to conclude anything from non-responses, it is needed to know if non-responses have been collected in the first place. Therefore the fields XXnonResponseCollected has been added to all sample table where the field ‘Reason for not sampling’ is; DE, TE, LO, VS, FT, FO, OS, LE, SS and SA. In SA there are 3 XXreasonNotSampled fields one for each of the tables SA, FM and BV, but the new field XXnonResponseCollected has only been added once for the SA table itself.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Field Name Description** | **Field Name** | **Description** |
| Non-response collected at this level | XXnonResponseCollected | Indicate whether non-responses were recorded at this sampling level. |

## Auxiliary variables

The auxiliary variables have been added to all sample tables except BV, FM and SD. The auxiliary fields make it possible to use additional variables for ratio estimation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Field Name Description** | **Field Name** | **Description** |
| Auxiliary Variable Total | XXauxiliaryVariableTotal | The total value of auxiliary variable in the stratum (to be used in, e.g., ratio estimation). Auxiliary variables are 'extra' variables measured in association with the desired variable that might be used to increase precision of the estimate. |
| Auxiliary Variable Value | XXauxiliaryVariableValue | The value of auxiliary variable in the sampled unit. Auxiliary variables are 'extra' variables measured in association with the desired variable that might be used to increase precision of the estimate. |
| Auxiliary Variable Name | XXauxiliaryVariableName | The name of the auxiliary variable. Auxiliary variables are 'extra' variables measured in association with the desired variable that might be used to increase precision of the estimate. |
| Auxiliary Variable Unit | XXauxiliaryVariableUnit | Auxiliary variable measurement unit (e.g., %, hour, kg) |

An example: From the Fishing Operation:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | New | New | New | New |
| FOselection Method | FOunitName | FOauxiliary VariableTotal | FOauxiliary VariableValue | FOauxiliary VariableName | FOauxiliary VariableUnit |
| SRSWOR | haul1 | 1200 | 250 | FishingEffort | minutes |
| SRSWOR | haul2 | 1200 | 225 | FishingEffort | minutes |
| SRSWOR | haul3 | 1200 | 150 | FishingEffort | minutes |
| SRSWOR | haul5 | 1200 | 350 | FishingEffort | minutes |

# Other key concepts

## Commercial species

A frequent need of commercial sampling programmes is that the species composition of boxes from generic commercial designations[[1]](#footnote-2) (such as “rays”, “anglerfishes”, “seabreams”, etc.) can be recorded. The RDBES is prepared to accommodate those data by offering the possibility of i) stating lists of commercial species in the Species Selection Table (SLid in the Species Selection Table) and ii) declaring, e.g., the sampled boxes of commercial species in the Sample Table (using the Commercial Species (SAcommercialSpecies) to identify the commercial name) with the biological species sampled featuring as subsamples.

**Example: Simplified example of reporting of commercial species in table Species List Details (CHECK).**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **SLid** | **SLspeciesCode** | **SLcommercialSpecies** |
| 1 | 126554 | MNZ |
| 2 | 126555 | MNZ |

## Recording of samples collected by fishers or control (new in the RBDES)

Data collection by fishers (Self sampling) or control agencies can take place at different levels of a sampling design: e.g., vessels are in some cases selected by the industry; the discards can be collected at-sea by fishers or control agents and processed later in the lab; in some cases, fishers themselves collect length frequencies and/or ages. Identification of cases when direct observation or validation by scientific observers did not take place is important so by default the main tables of the RDBES include a sampler variable that can be used to highlight such cases - named sampler in all table with table name as prefix e.g. VSsampler in the Vessel Selection table

## Recording of non-probabilistic sampling (new in the RBDES)

The RDBES is structured to accommodate statistically sound sampling designs. Such designs are generally composed of clearly delineated sampling hierarchies and probabilistic sample selection methods. Practice shows that is rarely the case but that in most cases, users are still able to relate their sampling protocol to one of the hierarchies and can record their departures from statistical principles in the selection method variable (e.g., as ad-hoc). However, in some cases (particularly in the case of poorly documented older data) it may be difficult to unequivocally identify the levels of the design themselves, i.e., different hierarchies may appear to equally fit the data. In such cases it is recommended that countries make a best guess and use the hierarchy they think most approximate the original one. Then, variable DEhierarchyCorrect in the design table should be used to identify that those hierarchies are ambiguous and likely mis-specified.

# Annex I: Description of each hierarchy

The following is a short description of each of the 13 upper hierarchy and the 4 lower hierarchies. The 1, 2, 3, 10 and 13 of the 13 upper hierarchies are often used for at-sea sampling, the others are often used for on-shore sampling. Remember before uploading any hierarchies the Vessel Details and the Species Lists have to be uploaded, so the tables/records in the hierarchies can refer to the Vessel Details and the Species Lists.

### Hierarchy 1 Sampling from a vessel list or from a reference fleet

Hierarchy 1 is most used for at-sea sampling, but can be used for on-shore sampling as well.

Different schemes which all fits the hierarchy 1:

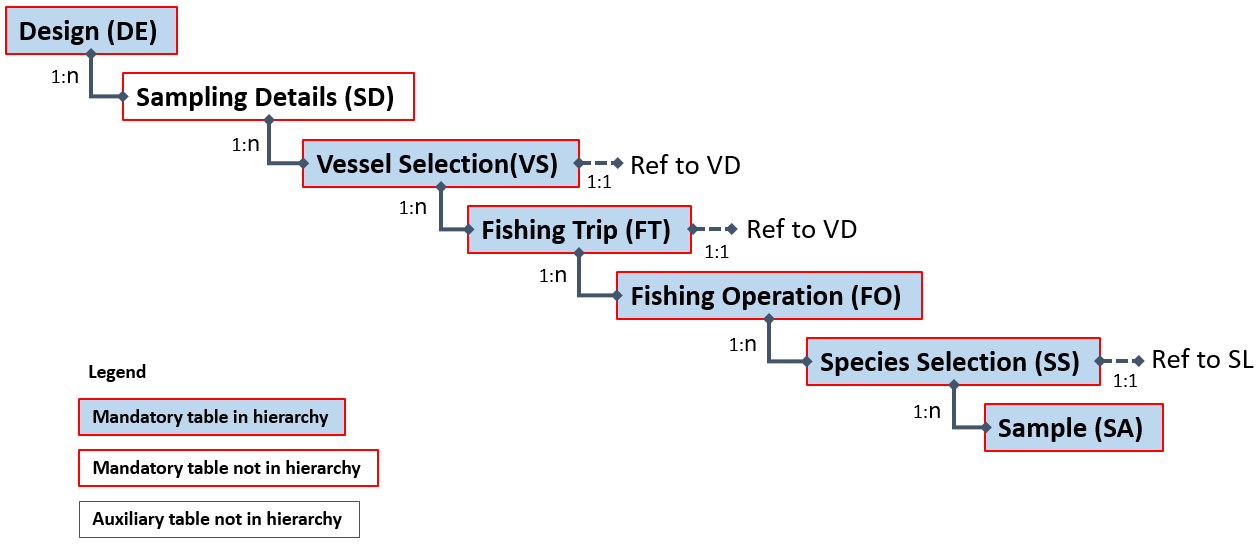
* at-sea sampling with vessel selection from a vessel list, then fishing trip(s) from each vessel. Some or all fishing operations (hauls/sets) are sampled;
* at-sea sampling with vessel selection from a reference fleet, then fishing trip(s) from each vessel. Some or all fishing operations (hauls/sets) are sampled
* at-sea sampling with vessel selection from a vessel list, then fishing trip(s) from each vessel. Some or all fishing operations (hauls/sets) are sampled; some samples come from individual fishing operations (aggregation H) and some from the whole trip (aggregation T)
* on-shore sampling with vessel selection from a vessel list, then fishing trip(s) from each vessel. The last fishing operation (haul/set) is sampled.

*Upper hierarchy tables:*

* Design (DE)
* Vessel Selection (VS)
* Fishing Trip (FT)
* Fishing Operation (FO)
* Species Selection (SS)
* Sample (SA)

*Auxiliary tables:*

* Sampling Details (SD) (mandatory)
* Vessel Details (VD) (mandatory) When imported VD has the link from FT, and is therefore after VS and before FT
* Species List Details (SL) (mandatory)



Example(s) described:

For example, an institute has set up a reference fleet for gillnetters in a specific area. The 1st of January 5 vessels are selected. During the year a number of fishing trips are sampled on each vessel. The selection of fishing trips is stratified by quarter. Data from one fishing trip is shown in the example. During the fishing trip one fishing operation is carried out. All species are weighted in the catch (no species selection). Catch is stratified by catch category.

Another example, an institute has set up a reference fleet for gillnetters. At the beginning of each quarter a list of vessels is being selected from the gillnetters reference fleet. Afterwards a contact person for each vessel is being called and asked about the possibility of on-shore sampling. In case of agreement, a fisherman gives the details about planned harbour and time of arrival. An observer is being sent to the given place on a given day and takes the sample from the last haul. All species are weighted in the catch.

### Hierarchy 2: Sampling from a list of trips

Hierarchy 2 is most used for at-sea sampling, but can be used for on-shore sampling as well.

Different schemes which all fits the hierarchy 2:

* at-sea sampling from available fishing trips; some or all fishing operations (hauls/sets) are sampled
* at-sea sampling from available fishing trips; aggregated fishing operations (hauls/sets) are sampled
* on-shore sampling from available fishing trips; aggregated fishing operations (hauls/sets) are sampled when landed
* on-shore sampling from available fishing trips; the last fishing operation (haul/set) is sampled.

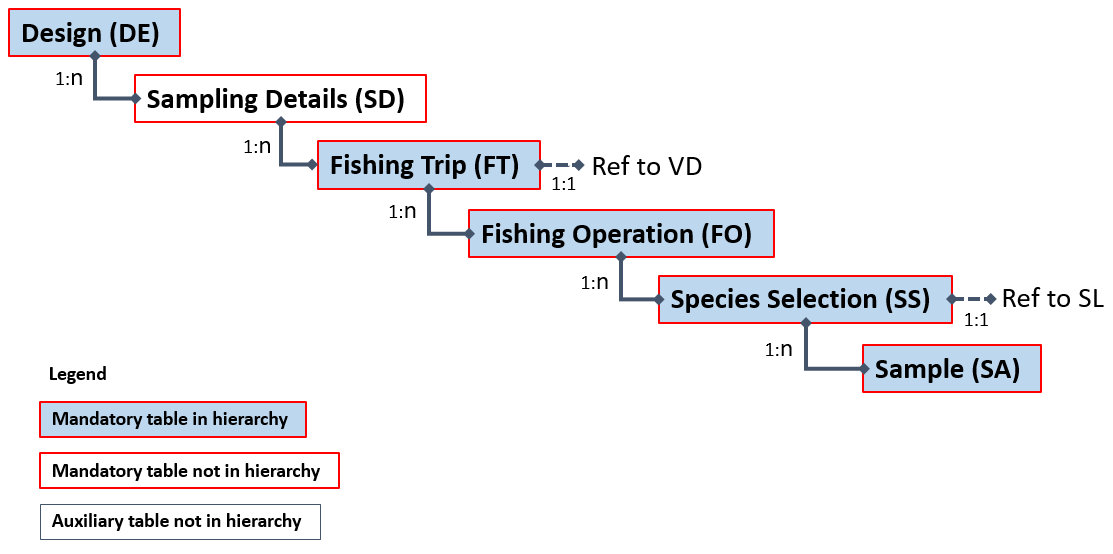
A list of trips to sample from is not always available, but a vessel list is used as a proxy for selecting trips. In reality we often try to squeeze sampling design where we sample from a vessel list into this hierarchy, when it may be more appropriated to use hierarchy 1[[2]](#footnote-3).

Upper hierarchy tables:

* Design (DE)
* Fishing Trip (FT)
* Fishing Operation (FO)
* Species Selection (SS)
* Sample (SA)

Auxiliary tables:

* Sampling Details (SD) (mandatory)
* Vessel Details (VD) (mandatory)
* Species List Details (SL) (mandatory)



Example(s) described:

For example, an institute samples a fishing trip conducted by a vessel from the “Hirtshals-TBB-NA-1” stratum. During the fishing trip 26 fishing operations are carried out (one of them being invalid and therefore not included in ‘FOnumberTotal’) – 6 of the valid hauls are sampled without stratification. All species are weighted in the catch (no species selection). Catch is stratified by catch category and species are sampled for weight on these hauls.

### Hierarchy 3: Sampling where time (e.g., days, weeks) is the primary sampling unit and vessel is the second sampling unit

Hierarchy 3 is most used for at-sea sampling, but can be used for on-shore sampling as well.

Different schemes fit the hierarchy 3:

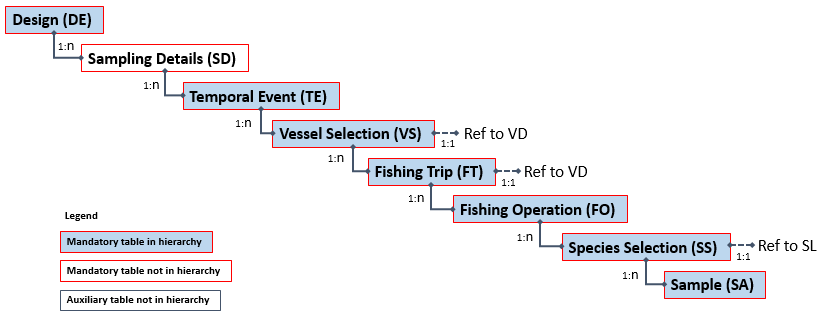
* At-sea sampling where a time period is first selected (e.g., a set of weeks) for sampling to take place. Then, in each time period, vessels in a list are contacted and fishing trips booked. Observers are deployed on fishing trips and sample the fishing operations. In each fishing operation the two catch categories - discards and landings – that are sampled separately and the weights of the species present in each category are determined.
* Variants:
  1. Self-sampling by fishers
  2. Selection of different time units (e.g., day, month)
  3. Sampling all fishing operations or a subset of them
  4. Sampling only discards, taking a catch sample that is sorted later into landings and discards, etc.
  5. Sampling all species or only species from pre-defined list(s)
  6. Different sampling and subsampling strategies for landings and discards (e.g., stratification by size category, subsampling by sex, etc.)

*Upper hierarchy tables:*

* Design (DE)
* Temporal Event (TE)
* Vessel Selection (VS)
* Fishing Trip (FT)
* Fishing Operation (FO)
* Species Selection (SS)
* Sample (SA)

*Auxiliary tables:*

* Sampling Details (SD) (mandatory)
* Vessel Details (VD) (mandatory) When imported VD has the link from FT, and is therefore after VS and before FT
* Species List Details (SL) (mandatory)



Example(s) described:

In the sampling design of “A Country” (XYZ), an institute (ANI) selected 3 weeks randomly each quarter for at-sea sampling to take place. In each selected week, 2 vessels were randomly selected and contacted. In a specific week all vessels contacted agreed to cooperate. For each vessel a trip was randomly selected from the ones the vessel planned to undertake that week and observers deployed on it. Observers sampled all fishing operations (n=6) and sampled both the landings and the discards of each fishing operation. The landings were sorted by the fishers into species\*size category and the observers used boxes to subsample them. The discards were originally unsorted in a bulk of 13 containers and observers randomly sampled one of them. The content of that container was sorted by species and each species was subsampled to meet pre-specified goals (quota sampling).

### Hierarchy 4 Sampling by selecting from location\*time (e.g. harbour-day), then from Fishing Trips, then from Landing Events from those Fishing Trips

Hierarchy 4 is most used for on-shore sampling, but can be used for at-sea sampling as well.

Different schemes which all fits the hierarchy:

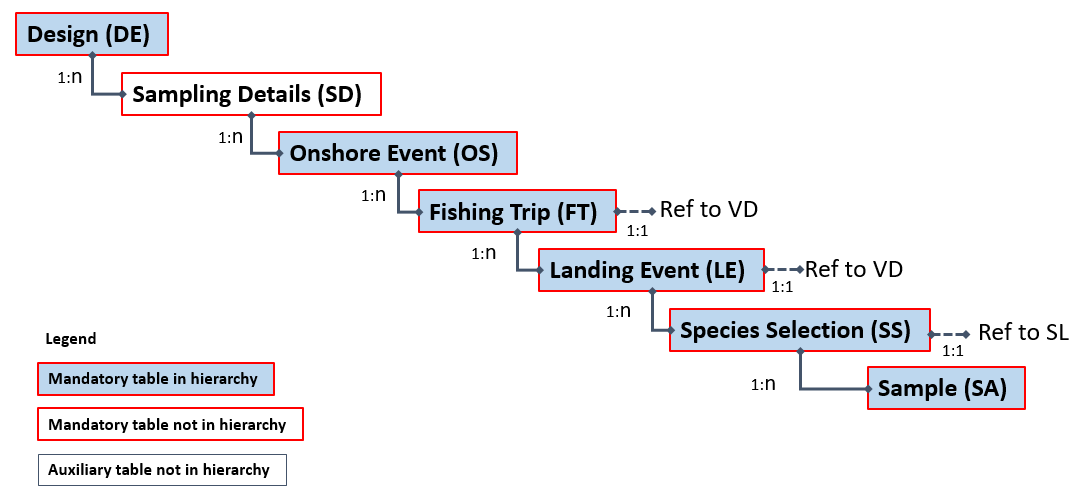
* On-shore sampling at markets or ports. A location and time period (e.g. harbour-day) are chosen and then Fishing Trips that are landing at that location-time period are sampled; detailed information on the fishing trip is available, then Landing Events from those sampled Fishing Trips are sampled.

*Upper hierarchy tables:*

* Design (DE)
* On-shore Event (OS)
* Fishing Trip (FT)
* Landing Event (LE)
* Species Selection (SS)
* Sample (SA)

*Auxiliary tables:*

* Sampling Details (SD) (mandatory)
* Vessel Details (VD) (mandatory)
* Species List Details (SL) (mandatory)



Example(s) described:

An institute has a port-week as its primary sampling unit. For example, an institute samples Week 3 at “Pelagic Port A” in the “PelagicQ1” stratum. During that week 5 fishing trips return to port (it is known that these fishing trips will land their entire contents at this port during this week) – these trips are unstratified and 2 of them are sampled. 1 of those fishing trips (PTrip1) has a single landing event, but 1 of them (PTrip2) lands over 2 days. The single landing event of PTrip1 is sampled, but only 1 of the 2 landing events for PTrip2 is sampled.

### Hierarchy 5 Sampling by selecting from location\*time (e.g. harbour-day) as primary sampling unit, then from Landing Events as the secondary sampling unit.

Hierarchy 5 is most used for on-shore sampling, but can be used for at-sea sampling as well.

Different schemes which all fits the hierarchy 5:

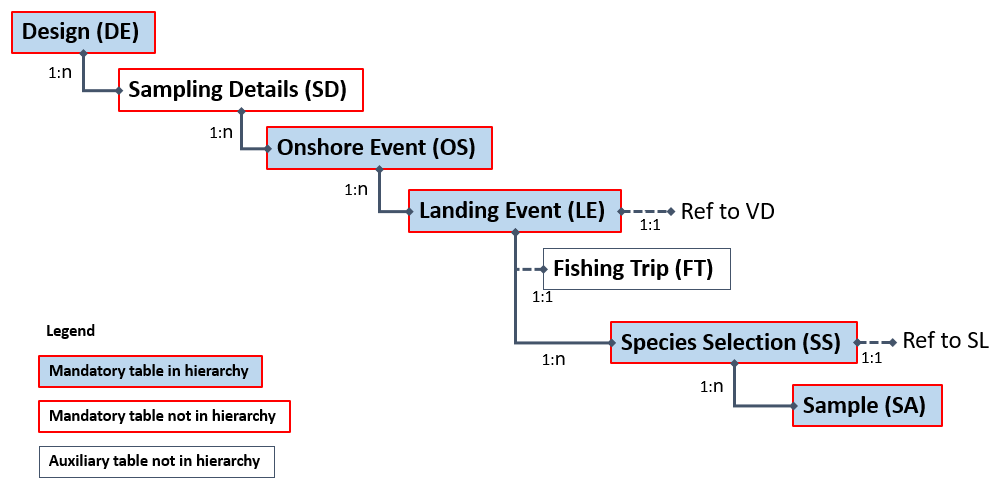
* On-shore sampling from a list of landing sites sampled at random days. In each day observers sample some of the landing events present on-site. Data on the associated fishing trips is generally known, but not part of the selection procedure.
* On-shore sampling from a list of landing sites sampled at random days, samples of all or some landings. Fishing trip is not known.
* Variants:
  1. Random selection from a list of landing sites.
  2. Random selection from a cluster of landing sites, followed by random selection within clusters.
  3. Sampling surveys visiting landing sites along coast, with randomized start times and start positions.

*Upper hierarchy tables:*

* Design (DE)
* On-shore (OS)
* Landing Event (LE)
* Species Selection (SS)
* Sample (SA)

*Auxiliary tables:*

* Sampling Details (SD)
* Vessel Details (VD) (mandatory)
* Fishing Trip (FT) (optional)
* Species List Details (SL) (mandatory)



Example(s) described:

Sampling days are selected randomly, and on each selected day, a landing site is selected at random from a list of landing sites. Each site-day is registered in the *Onshore Event* table and visited by observers. In each visit, there are many landing events on site and some of them are selected for sampling and recorded in the *Landing Event* table (Note: the observers just know that some landings from a trip are there, they cannot guarantee that each landing event effectively comprises the entire landings from that trip, or that it does not accumulate fish from two successive trips from a single vessel). In each landing event the species present in a particular list of target species are sampled (the list is specified in the Species Selection table). For each target species the corresponding fraction of the landing is registered as a sample in the *Sample* table, and then a subsample of 30 fish registered in the same table.

### Hierarchy 6 Sampling where Fishing Trips are sampled

Hierarchy 6 is most used for on-shore sampling, but can be used for at-sea sampling as well.

Different schemes which all fits the hierarchy 6:

* On-shore sampling at markets or landing ports; known Fishing Trips sampled at random; sale categories and single, concurrent or stratified species selection.
* On-shore sampling from buyers or vendors; known Fishing Trips; sale categories of aggregated landing, and single, concurrent or stratified species selection.
* Note: Hierarchy 6 differs from Hierarchy 7 on the certainty of information existing on the trips and samples. The trips of hierarchy 6 generally involve a single gear and fishing area and their landing events are generally known to represent the entirety of catch (i.e., no catch retained on board these trips). Hierarchy 7 is much more common and should be used where there is the possibility that on-shore samples come from different gears or areas and/or where there is the possibility that samples obtained do not represent the entire trip (e.g., if some retained catch can be kept on board for future landings; transhipment may have taken place, etc.). See FAQs.

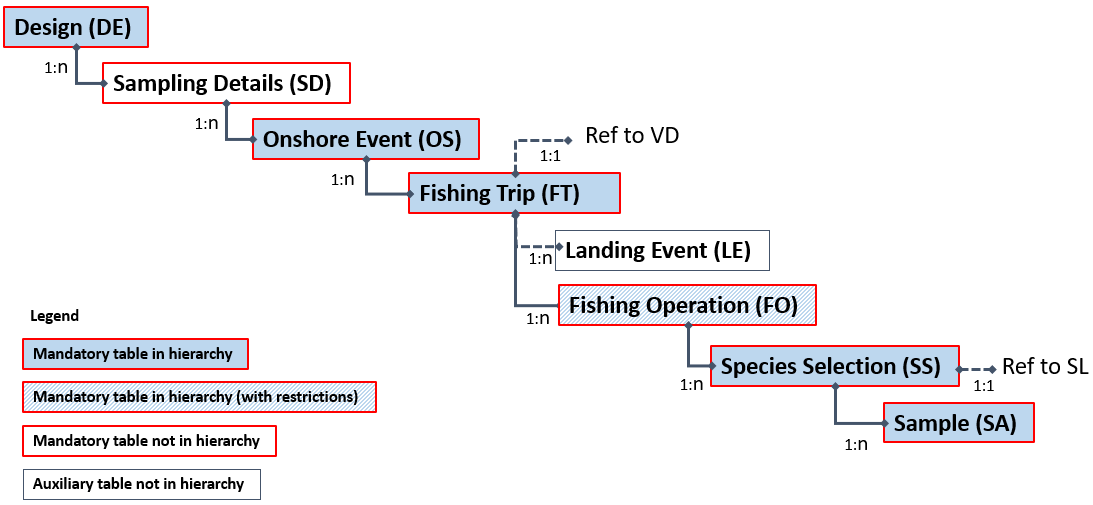
*Upper hierarchy tables:*

* Design (DE)
* Sampling Details (SD)
* On-shore Event (OS)
* Fishing Trip (FT)
* Fishing Operation (FO)\*
* Species Selection (SS)
* Sample (SA)

\* FOaggregationLevel must be set to “T”

*Auxiliary tables:*

* Sampling Details (SD) (mandatory)
* Vessel Details (VD) (mandatory)
* Landing Event (LE) (optional)
* Species List Details (SL) (mandatory)



Example(s) described:

an institute has a port-day as its primary sampling unit. For example, an institute samples Day 28 at “Port DFG” in the “SmallPortQ1” stratum. During that day 6 fishing trips return to port (it is known that these fishing trips fished in a single area and with a single gear and that they land their entire contents at this port during this day). 2 of these trips are in the “DayTrip” stratum, and 4 are in the “LongerTrip” stratum. All landing events from 1 of the trips in the “DayTrip” stratum are sampled, and all landing events from 1 of the fishing trips in the “LongerTrip” stratum are sampled.

### Hierarchy 7. Sampling at markets or ports, where location\*time is the primary sampling unit

Hierarchy 7 is most used for on-shore sampling, but can be used for at-sea sampling as well.

On-shore sampling at markets or ports, where location\*time is the primary sampling unit and species are the secondary sampling unit. Fishing Trips and landing events may be known but are not a part of the selection.

Different schemes which all fits the hierarchy 7:

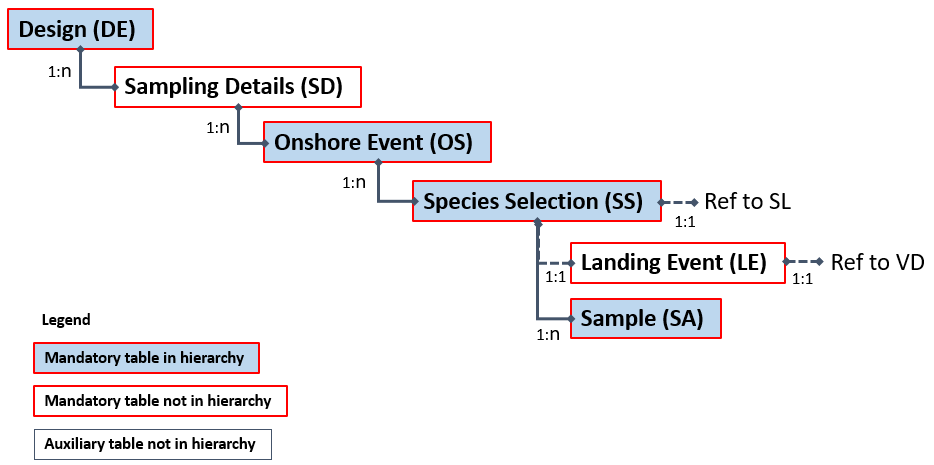
* On-shore sampling at markets or ports. Some or all species present at the market are sampled without considering which fishing trip or landing event they come from. Information on the fishing trip and/or landings events may be collected but is auxiliary.
* On-shore sampling at markets or ports. Information on the fishing trip or landings event is not available. Some or all species of the landing are sampled.
* Variants:
  1. On-shore sampling from buyers or vendors.
  2. Sampling boxes from size categories

*Upper hierarchy tables:*

* Design (DE)
* On-shore Event (OS)
* Species Selection (SS)
* Sample (SA)

*Auxiliary tables:*

* Sampling Details (SD) (mandatory)
* Vessel Details (VD) (mandatory)
* Landing Event (LE) (mandatory)
* Species List Details (SL) (mandatory)



Example(s) described:

In the sampling design of Institute X, the person responsible for the sampling choose markets to visit, and times to visit them, at their own discretion. On 11-01-2016 observers went to market A and only one species from the list was present: Plaice. They sampled length-frequency as well as biological variables from that species. Within the sample there are 4 different size categories. In the next market\*date (market B, 14-01-2016) again only one species was present and a sample of Sole was taken. In this sample, only length-frequency measures were taken. Within the sample there are 3 different size categories.

### Hierarchy 8 Sampling where time (e.g., days, weeks) is the primary sampling unit and vessel is the secondary sampling unit

Hierarchy 8 is most used for on-shore sampling, but can be used for at-sea sampling as well.

Different schemes fit the hierarchy 8:

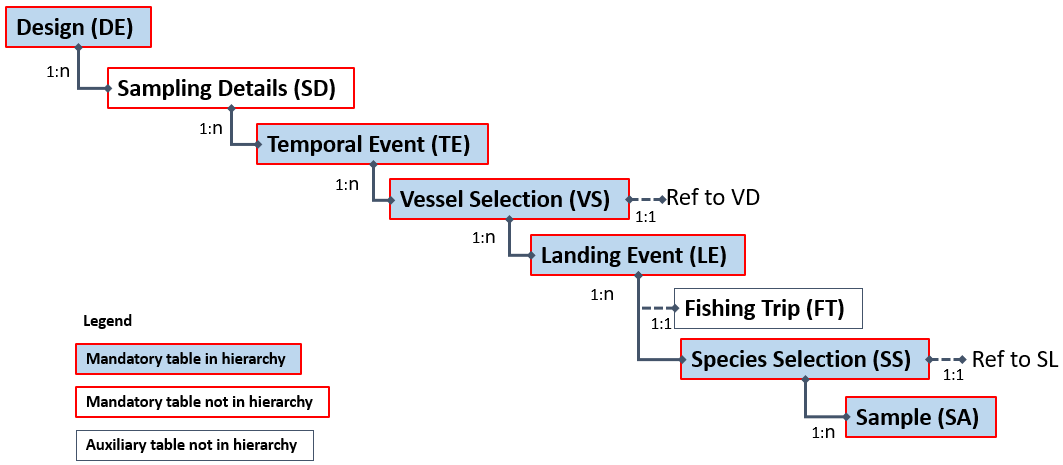
* Onshore sampling of landings where a time period is first selected (e.g., a set of weeks) for sampling to take place. Then, in each time period, a set of vessels is selected for sampling. One (or more) landing events from those vessels are sampled and in each one (or more) species are sampled. Information from the fishing trips, including start and end-dates may be available but generally only a posteriori (e.g., from logbooks): Selection takes place on the landing event and not on the fishing trip (which may register other landing events elsewhere or at a later occasion).
* Variants:
  1. Sampling carried out in ports or auctions
  2. Sampling done by observers or subcontractors
  3. Selection of different time units (e.g., day, month)
  4. Sampling all species in the landing or only species from pre-defined list(s)
  5. Different sampling strategies for the landings (e.g., stratification by commercial name/group, stratification by commercial size, etc.)

*Upper hierarchy tables:*

* Design (DE)
* Temporal Event (TE)
* Vessel Selection (VS)
* Landing Event (LE)
* Species Selection (SS)
* Sample (SA)

*Auxiliary tables:*

* Sampling Details (SD) (mandatory)
* Vessel Details (VD) (mandatory)
* Fishing trip (FT) (optional)
* Species List Details (SL) (mandatory)



Example(s) described:

In the sampling design of a country (XYZ) an Institute (ANI) selected 8 weeks randomly each quarter for onshore sampling to take place. In each selected week, 4 vessels were selected for sampling. The list of vessels selected was sent to a subcontractor that was asked to sample one landing event from each of those vessels that landed that week. In each landing event only one species (cod) was sampled. Sampling was done by size category. 3 size categories were present: size 4, size 5 and size 7. From each 1 box was taken. All specimens in the sample were measured and aged.

### Hierarchy 9 Sampling where location is the primary sampling unit, time is the secondary sampling unit and fish the tertiary sampling unit

Hierarchy 9 is most used for on-shore sampling.

Different schemes fit the hierarchy 9:

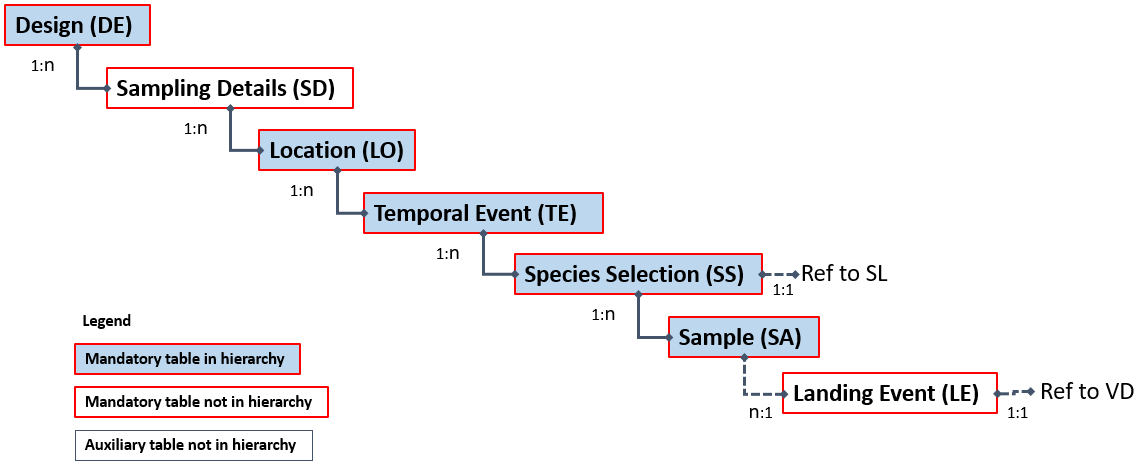
* On-shore sampling of landings, where a set of auctions (Location) are selected in the start of a period. Then, a set of dates are selected for sampling in each location (Temporal event). A set list of species are sampled within a location (Species Selection). Landing events are present but cannot be distinguished or are not of interest within the sampling. One or more boxes of fish are sampled from each species and size category (Sample). Each box of fish comes from one landing event or more landing events.
* Variants:
  1. Weight instead of boxes
  2. All locations are sampled within the period, so this works a bit like a reference fleet of locations
  3. One single location sampled within the period

*Upper hierarchy tables:*

* Design (DE)
* Location (LO)
* Temporal Event (TE)
* Species Selection (SS)
* Sample (SA)

*Auxiliary tables:*

* Sampling Details (SD) (mandatory)
* Landing Event (LE) (mandatory)
* Vessel Details (VD) (mandatory)
* Species List Details (SL) (mandatory)

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### Hierarchy 10 Sampling where vessel is the primary sampling unit, time is the secondary sampling unit and trip is the tertiary sampling unit

Hierarchy 10 is most used for at-sea sampling, but can be used for on-shore sampling as well.

Different schemes fit the hierarchy 10:

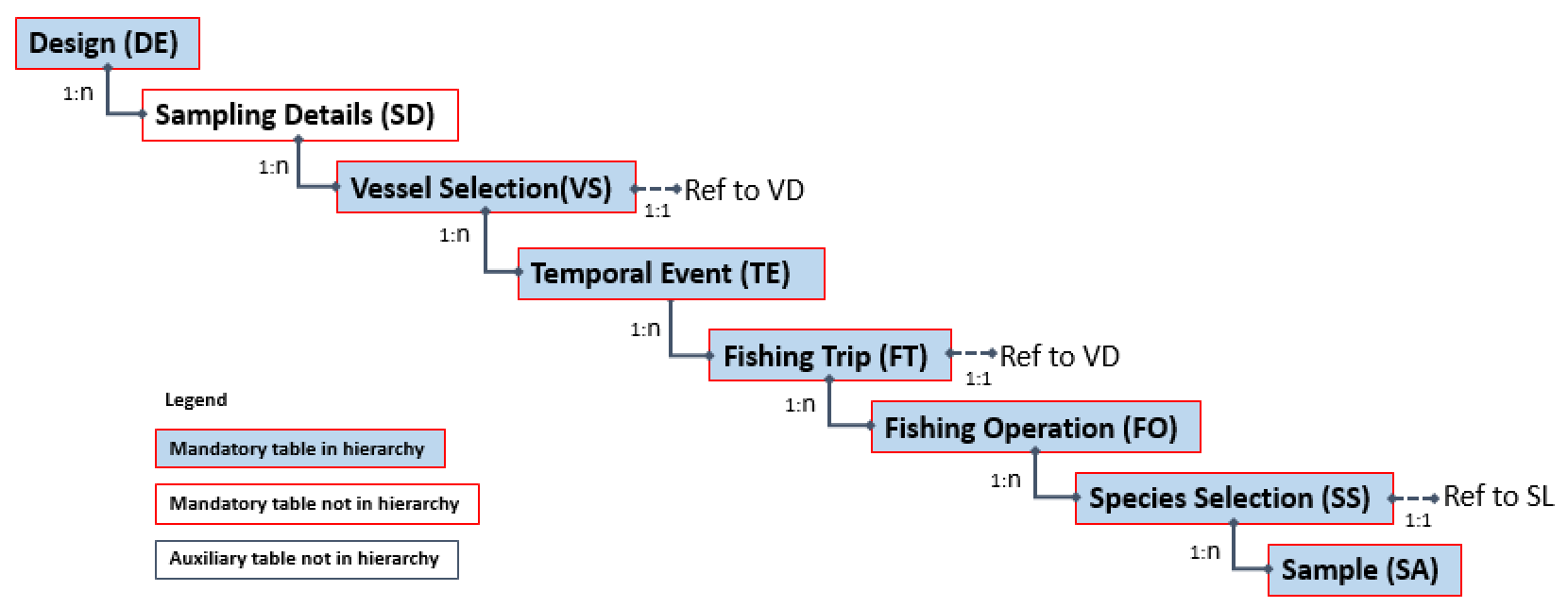
* At-sea sampling, where a set of vessels (Vessel) are selected in the start of a period (e.g., a quarter). Then, one or more weeks (Temporal) are selected for sampling each vessel. In each week, contact is made and a trip is booked (Trip). In the trip, one or more hauls are sampled (Fishing Operation). A set of species is sampled in each haul (Species Selection) from the different catch categories. One or more boxes of fish are sampled from each selected species\*size category.
* Variants:
  1. Vessels selected with UPWOR at quarterly level
  2. One or more weeks sampled per vessel
  3. Weeks only used to contact vessel with next trip selected
  4. Weight instead of boxes
* This hierarchy is particularly useful if a list of vessels are sampled without replacement at quarterly level

*Upper hierarchy tables:*

* Design (DE)
* Vessel (VS)
* Temporal Event (TE)
* Fishing Trip (FT)
* Fishing Operation (FO)
* Species Selection (SS)
* Sample (SA)

*Auxiliary tables:*

* Sampling Details (SD) (mandatory)
* Vessel Details (VD) (mandatory)
* Species List Details (SL) (mandatory)



### Hierarchy 11 Sampling where location is the primary sampling unit, time is the secondary sampling unit and fishing trip the tertiary sampling unit

Hierarchy 11 is most used for on-shore sampling, but can be used for at-sea sampling as well.

Different schemes fit the hierarchy 11:

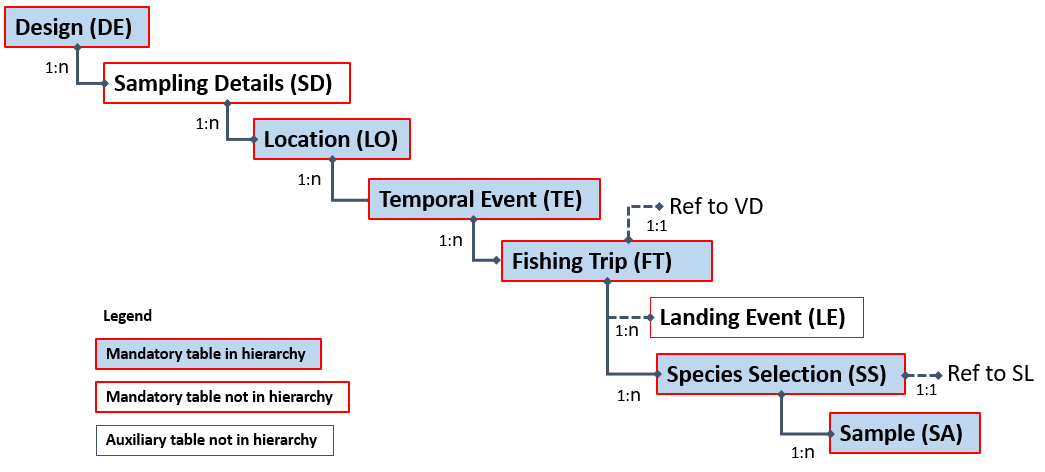
* On-shore sampling at landing ports or vendors where locations are selected first (e.g. in the beginning of a year). Each location is then sampled at random times (e.g. days). Within the time selected, some fishing trips are then sampled.
* Variants:
  1. Sampling at markets, buyers or vendors
* Note:
  1. This hierarchy is similar to hierarchy 6, the difference being that different types of probability sampling can be used for location and time and both can be specified. Use hierarchy 6 if you are using the same selection methods across space and time.

*Upper hierarchy tables:*

* Design (DE)
* Location (LO)
* Temporal Event (TE)
* Fishing Trip (FT)
* Species Selection (SS)
* Sample (SA)

*Auxiliary tables:*

* Sampling Details (SD) (mandatory)
* Landing Event (LE) (mandatory)
* Vessel Details (VD) (mandatory)
* Species List Details (SL) (mandatory)

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### Hierarchy 12 Sampling where location is the primary sampling unit, time is the secondary sampling unit and landing event the tertiary sampling unit

Hierarchy 12 is most used for on-shore sampling, but can be used for at-sea sampling as well.

Different schemes fit the hierarchy 12:

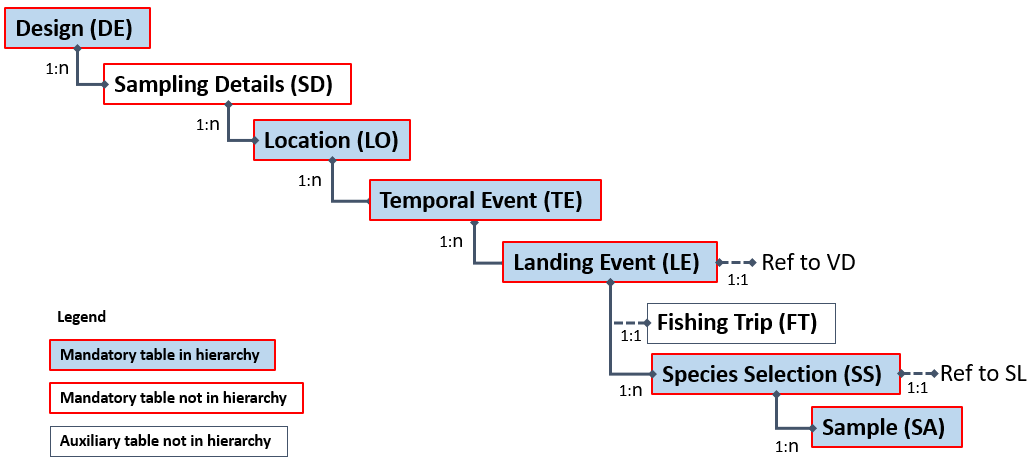
* On-shore sampling landing ports where locations are selected first (e.g. in the beginning of a year). Each location is then sampled at random times (e.g. days). Within the time selected, some fishing landing events are then sampled. Data on the associated fishing trips is generally known, but not part of the selection procedure.
* This hierarchy is very similar to hierarchy 5, the difference being that instead of selecting an on-shore event (location\*time), then this is split into first selecting a location and then selecting time (e.g. day). A bit like having a reference fleet of locations.
* Variants:
  1. Fishing trip is not known
  2. Sampling at markets, buyers or vendors
* Note:
  1. If you use equal-probability selection methods (SRSWR or SRSWOR) on both time and space components consider using hierarchy 5 instead.
  2. You can use this design for situations when you select first a set of times (e.g., days) and then sample one or more locations at each selected time

*Upper hierarchy tables:*

* Design (DE)
* Location (LO)
* Temporal Event (TE)
* Landing Event (LE)
* Species Selection (SS)
* Sample (SA)

*Auxiliary tables:*

* Sampling Details (SD) (mandatory)
* Landing Event (LE) (mandatory)
* Vessel Details (VD) (mandatory)
* Species List Details (SL) (mandatory)

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### Hierarchy 13 Sampling where fishing operation is the primary sampling unit

Hierarchy 13 is most used for at-sea sampling, but can be used for on-shore sampling as well.

Different schemes fit the hierarchy 13:

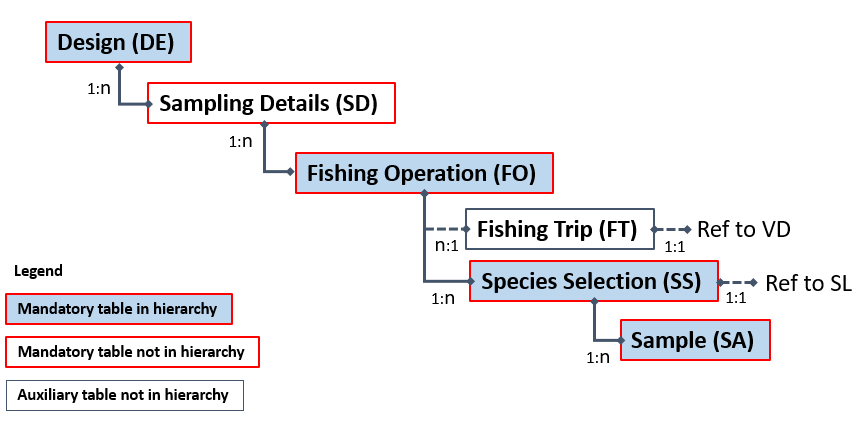
* Sampling where individual fishing operations can be sampled directly, without any prior vessel or trip selection, for instance via real time reporting of fishing activity.

*Upper hierarchy tables:*

* Design (DE)
* Fishing Operation (FO)
* Species Selection (SS)
* Sample (SA)

*Auxiliary tables:*

* Sampling Details (SD) (mandatory)
* Fishing Trip (FT) (optional)
* Species List Details (SL) (mandatory)

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### Lower Hierarchy A: Length stratified biological samples

Different schemes fit the lower hierarchy A:

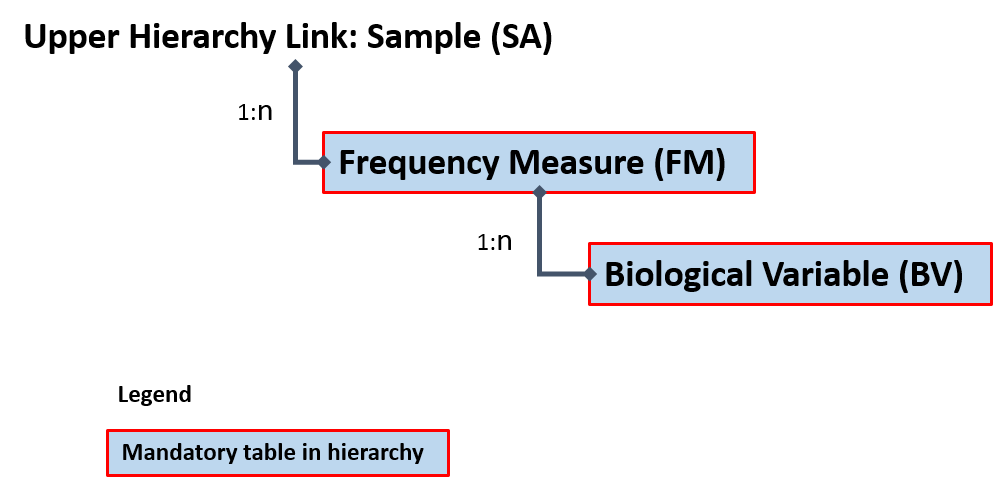
* The sample of a specific species is length measured and stratified by length into 1 cm classes. A fixed number of specimens is biologically sampled from each class (e.g., 2 individuals from each length class). Length, weight, sex and age are determined for each of them.
* Variants:
  1. Different length classes (e.g., 1mm, 0.5cm, 2.5cm, etc.)
  2. Different sample sizes from each length class (e.g., proportional to the number of fish in the length class).
  3. Additional biological variables on each fish sampled (e.g., maturity, stock, age quality, etc.)

*Upper hierarchy link:*

* Sample (SA)

*Lower hierarchy tables:*

* Frequency Measure (FM)
* Biological Variable (BV)



Example(s) described:

In a sample of species X, there are 18 fish. All fish are measured to the lowest cm and the sample is length stratified into 1cm length classes. The number of individuals in each length class is noted. Then, biological data is collected from up to 2 fish randomly selected from each length class. Data on length (in mm), weight (in g), age (in years), age quality and stock is available on each individual biologically sampled.

### Lower Hierarchy B: Only length frequency data is taken from sample(s)/subsample(s)

Different schemes fit the lower hierarchy B:

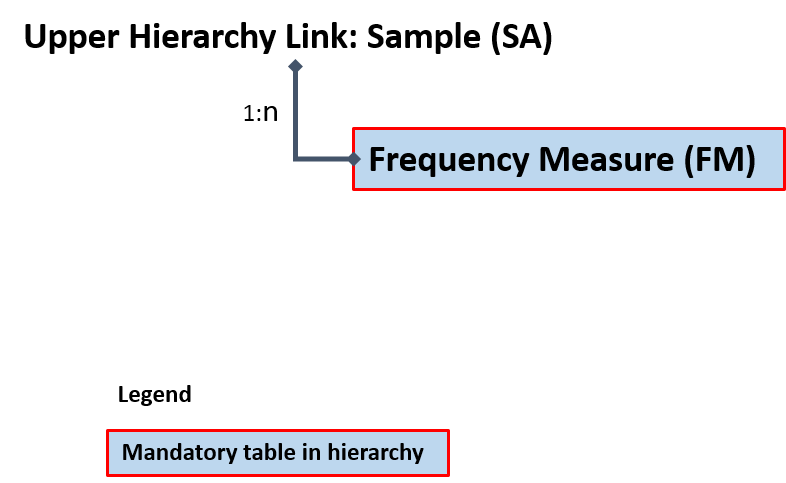
* The sample of a specific species is length measured to the lowest cm. No further biological analyses are carried out on the specimens.
* Variants:
  1. Different length classes (e.g., 1mm, 0.5cm, 2.5cm, etc.)

*Upper hierarchy link:*

* Sample (SA)

*Lower hierarchy tables:*

* Frequency Measure (FM)



Example:

In a sample of species X, there are 41 fish. All fish are measured to the lowest cm and data is organized into a 1-cm length frequency. No further biological data is collected from specimens.

### Lower Hierarchy C: All individuals in the sample/subsample are biologically analyzed

Different schemes fit the lower hierarchy C:

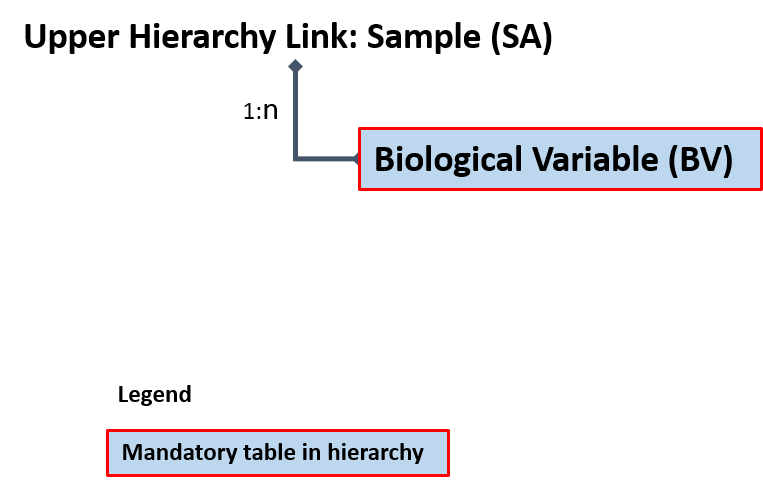
* The sample/subsample of a specific species is entirely biologically analyzed.
* Variants:
  1. Various biological variables collected on each fish sampled (e.g., maturity, stock, age quality, etc.)
  2. Length is not among the variables sampled (e.g., sampling directly for ages)

*Upper hierarchy link:*

* Sample (SA)

*Lower hierarchy tables:*

* Biological Variable (BV)



Example:

In a sample of species X, there are 4 fish. All fish are biologically analysed with length, weight, age and sex determined.

### Lower Hierarchy D: No length measurements or biological analyses

Different schemes fit the lower hierarchy D:

* Sample/subsample(s) of species that are weighed in bulk but not measured or biologically analysed (e.g., discards of some invertebrates; unsampled species from concurrent sampling of landing events).

*Upper hierarchy link:*

* Sample (SA)

*Lower hierarchy tables:*

* None

Example:

In a sample of species X no fish are measured or biologically analysed.

# Annex: II RDBES

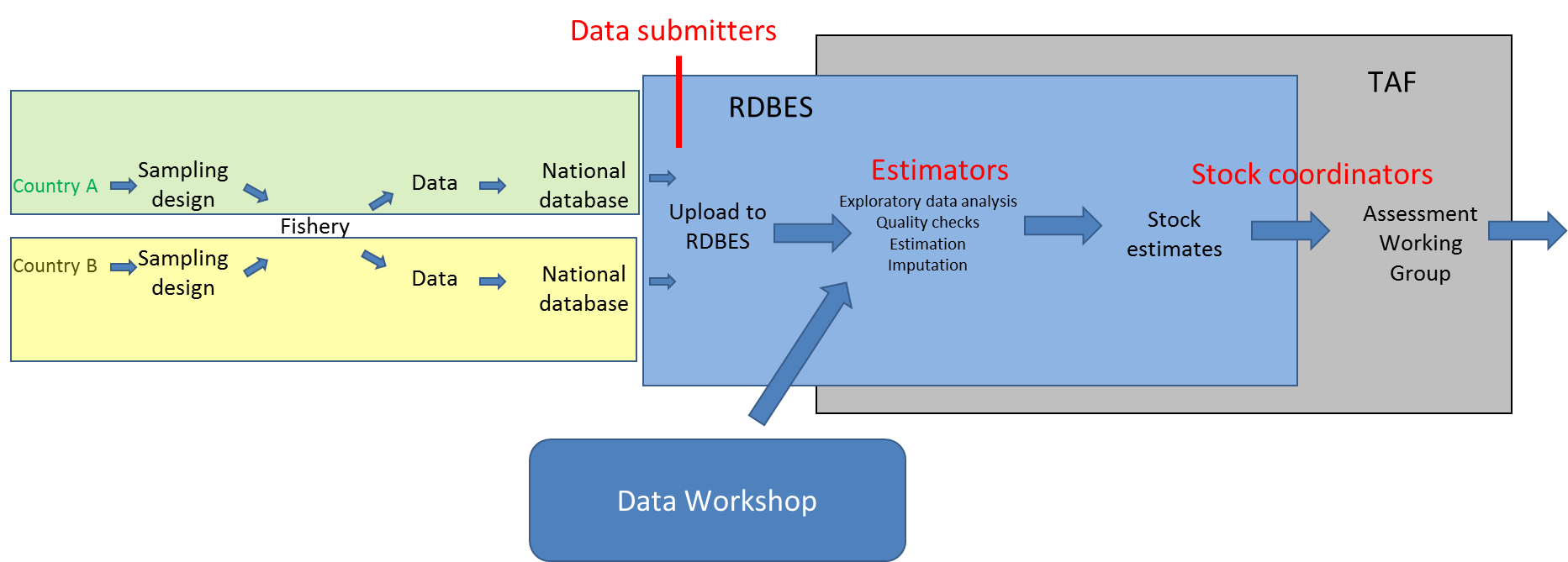
It has been recognised for many years that there is a need to have a new version of the RDB, which is the Regional DataBase and Estimation System development, RDBES, which also accommodate upload of statistical sampling information and statistical estimations.

It is important that the RDBES have only approved estimation methods and it is transparent regarding the processing and estimation of data. This is in the interest of the countries, ICES and the European Commission. The countries benefit from having one system where they can do the estimations. It is known that it is time consuming to do the complex estimations and there is risk of introducing errors, when estimating data for the ICES data call for the ICES stock assessment and advice. By using the RDBES, the RDBES will ensure high data quality and the user make sure the data is ready for estimation and select the right statistical estimation method. This will reduces the work load of the countries. The countries will also benefit from the common repository of all the countries’ developed estimation methods, this should also reduce the work load of reinventing estimation methods in the countries in parallel. The Transparent Assessment Framework, TAF, will be used for developing estimation methods and executing the estimations, and the RDBES will also be storing the final estimation methods. When the TAF has been used for estimating data, ICES does not need to issue stock assessment data calls, because the ICES Expert Groups can get the estimated data from the TAF, which is needed for the stock assessment. This will reduce the numbers of data calls, which will benefit the countries. The RDBES will replace the RDB and InterCatch, and there have been a shift regarding combining the RDBES and the Transparent Assessment Framework, TAF, regarding the estimations – the broad work flow will be as follows.

* Before a stock will be included in the RDBES a data workshop, which covers several species, must be held. This will require the countries that are relevant for that stock to upload data in the new RDBES format. The experts at the workshop will then look at the data and the existing national estimation techniques to agree on the stock estimation techniques that should be used.
* Once the data workshop has been concluded then future data calls for that stock will require countries to have uploaded data to the RDBES by a deadline, rather than submitting raised estimates. The estimates will then be produced by running R scripts on the RDBES data.
* At the data workshop it should be agreed who will create the stock estimates. E.g. will each country create national estimates, which are then combined into stock assessments, or will a single person, in dialog with the national expert create the stock estimates.
* The techniques agreed in the data workshop will then be applied within the Transparent Assessment Framework (TAF) and the RDBES. If there are reasons why the agreed techniques should be modified in a particular year, then it is a national responsibility to inform the estimator(s).
* The stock estimates are then used as an input to the TAF Stock Assessment, this will be the second loop in TAF.

The two main end users are the RCGs and ICES, but data could also be downloaded/exported for data calls for other relevant end users e.g. STECF or ICCAT.

The figure below gives an overview of the flow of data in the RDBES and TAF.



# Annex III: Frequently asked questions

### FAQ 1

**Question: What are sequence numbers, why are they in all selection tables and what is the difference between them and the unit names?**

Identifying the number of unique units present in a given sample is needed for some estimation methods (e.g., obtaining Horvitz-Thompson estimates from data collected using with-replacement methods). Furthermore, knowing the order of unit selection in sampling events is required for some bootstrap variance-estimation methods. In the RDBES sampled units are identified by "unitNames" and the order of selection by "sequenceNumbers".

When sampling method is without replacement (e.g., SRSWOR), a unit can only be selected for sampling once. This results in sequence numbers and unit names being unique within a sample. However, when sampling is done with replacement (e.g., SRSWR), some units can be selected two (or more) times generating duplications in unit names. Still, those units were selected in a certain order (or sequence) that clearly distinguishes them. The importance of the order of unit selection is not readily apparent in some estimates frequently calculated (e.g., means and variances of SRSWR); but becomes fundamental when one wants to consider bootstrapping of more complex designs involving, e.g., unequal probability sampling.

The following table shows conceptually the functioning of variables “sequenceNumber” and “unitName” in an RBDES table where data was collected by Simple Random Sampling With Replacement (SRSWR). In such situation, because the sampling was done With Replacement, duplicates are acceptable in variable unitName. In the present case, unit “A” was sampled twice (present twice in unitName); and sequenceNumber orders the two events (e.g., in time) allowing their distinction.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| sequenceNumber | Method | unitName |
| 1 | SRSWR | A |
| 2 | SRSWR | B |
| 3 | SRSWR | C |
| 4 | SRSWR | A |

The following table shows conceptually the functioning of variables “sequenceNumber” and “unitName” in an RDBES table where data was collected by Unequal Probability Sampling Without Replacement (UPSWOR). In such situation, because the sampling was done Without Replacement, no unit can be sampled more than once, so both unitNames and sequenceNumbers are unique.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| sequenceNumber | Method | unitName |
| 1 | UPSWOR | A |
| 2 | UPSWOR | B |
| 3 | UPSWOR | C |
| 4 | UPSWOR | D |

### FAQ 2

**Question:** Many vessels can be unequivocally identified by a combination of flag country and length and/or power and/or tonnage. Is it possible to maintain the anonymity of vessels in the RDBES data model?

**Answer.** Yes. Those characteristics are present in the Vessel Details table and are optional. In the rarer cases where length class unequivocally identifies the vessel, that variable can be set to “unknown”.

### FAQ 3

**Question:** Can the RDBES store data from sampling programmes, where the sampling units are, e.g., boxes of commercial designation that may hold multiple species (e.g., anglerfishes; rays)?

**Answer.** Yes. If sampling is done on a, e.g., subset commercial designations, the target commercial designations can be stated in a species list (Variable 6: SSspeciesListID in the Species Selection Table). Then, the boxes of the commercial designation can be entered as rows in the Sample table (Variable 8: SAcommercialSpecies) and subsamples of each box entered for each individual species present.

### FAQ 4

**Question:** Can the RDBES account for the possibility of fishing area being a strata or a domain of a fishing trip observed at sea?

**Answer:** If the sampling programme involves stratification of the fishing operations of each fishing trip by area then ‘FOnumberTotal’ and ‘FOnumberSampled’ must reflect the total number of fishing operations made and sampled from each area visited by the fishing trip. If the sampling programme does not involve stratification by area, e.g., if a systematic sample is taken from all fishing operations in the fishing trip and the area is only recorded, the ‘FOnumberTotal’ and ‘FOnumberSampled’ refers to the fishing trip. If e.g. total number of fishing operations are needed per area for e.g. ratio estimation, then the Fishing Operation table needs to be populated with all fishing operations (sampled and not-sampled).

### FAQ 5

**Question:** Can the RDBES store data from sampling programs at-sea where e.g. length measurements (Lower Hierarchy B) are collected per fishing operation, but fish for individual measurements (Lower Hierarchy C) are collected throughout the fishing trip and are not linked to a specific fishing operation?

**Answer:** Yes. For the fish collected per fishing operation for length measurements: *Fishing Operation table: ‘FOaggregationLevel=’H’.* Species Selection table: Filled with appropriated information. Sample table: ‘SAnumberTotal‘, ‘SAnumberSampled’, ‘SAsampProb’ and ‘SAselectionMethod’ are filled with the appropriated information and ‘SAlowerHierarchy=’B’. For fish collected for individual measurements throughout the fishing trip: *Fishing operation table: ‘FOaggregationLeve’=’T’*. Species Selection table: Filled with appropriated information. Sample table: ‘SAnumberTotal‘, ‘SAnumberSampled’, ‘SAsampProb’ and ‘SAselectionMethod’ are left empty and ‘SAlowerHierarchy’=’C’.

### FAQ 6

**Question:** If in an onboard trip the weights of some species are registered at haul level with the weights of other species being registered at trip level, how can this information be entered in the RDBES?   
**Answer:** In this case, the FO table should contain the rows of individual hauls (with FOaggregationLevel’=’H’) and one additional row corresponding to the whole trip (with FOaggregationLevel’=’T’). Each haul can have entries in the Species Selection, SS, table with corresponding SS lists used at haul level, e.g., for landings and discards; and the general trip row will also have such lines with the SS table carrying the SS lists recorded at trip level.

### FAQ 7

**Question:** If in an onboard trip the lengths are collected at haul level and the ages sampled at trip level, how can this information be entered in the RDBES?   
**Answer:** In this case, the FO table should contain the rows of individual hauls (with FOaggregationLevel’=’H’) and an extra row for the trip (FOaggregationLevel’=’T’). The “H” rows will be connected to a SA row with lower hierarchy B (lengths). The “T” will be connected to a SA row with lower hierarchy C (ages). In the SA table the weights should only be present in the Haul samples.

### FAQ 8

**Question:** Can unequal probability (e.g., proportional to size) be specified in the RDBES?

**Answer:** Yes. You can do that by specifying “Unequal Probability Sampling With Replacement (UPSWR)” or “Unequal Probability Sampling Without Replacement (UPSWOR)” in selectionMethod and providing the inclusion probability of each element included in the sample in sampProb variable. See example below.

**Example: Simplified example of a sample where elements were sampled with replacement and unequal probability proportional to size. A sample of vessels (n = 5)) was taken with replacement from a population of N=10 vessels. The probabilities of inclusion of the elements of the population were: 1001 = 1002 = 0.3; 1003 to 1010 = .05. Note the probabilities of inclusion must be provided in sampProb.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **VDid** | **VSstratum** | **VSselectionMethod** | **VSnumberTotal** | **VSnumberSampled** | **VSsampProb** |
| 1 | None | Unequal probability with replacement | 10 | 5 | 0.3 |
| 2 | None | Unequal probability with replacement | 10 | 5 | 0.3 |
| 3 | None | Unequal probability with replacement | 10 | 5 | 0.3 |
| 4 | None | Unequal probability with replacement | 10 | 5 | 0.05 |
| 5 | None | Unequal probability with replacement | 10 | 5 | 0.3 |

### FAQ 9

**Question:** What is the difference between selecting a Fishing Trip (FT) and selecting a Landing Event (LE)?:

**Answer:** A Fishing Trip is defined as a vessel operating between departure and arrival date and times; A Landing event is defined as a vessel unloading/selling some catch (could be part of the catch; could be catch from several trips) in a specific port/market. The two concepts have distinct usages during onshore sampling. In most onshore sampling situations observers sample a vessel’s landings but *do not know or are not sure* if what they are sampling represents the whole landings from a trip or if, e.g., the vessel still has some fish onboard to be landed elsewhere *or* has landed elsewhere before *or* has pooled landings from several previous fishing trips that it is selling all at once in that market-day. Additional cases exist when catch of a vessel is landed over several days in the same port but only one of those days do observers sample. In all such cases it is generally difficult to warrant that the landings being sampled are fully representative of a specific trip. Such difficulty is reflected in the RDBES by stating what is actually being sampled are the landings from one (or more) *Landing Events* and not from one (or more) *Fishing Trips*. Note: For practical purposes a *Landing event* can be considered as the landings made by a vessel in a specific place and time while the *landings of a Fishing Trip* are the landings of a specific fishing trip in all places and times.

The decision as to whether you are sampling Landing Events or Fishing Trips will come down to your sampling scheme – is it specifically designed to always sample entire trips? If not, then you should probably use a sampling hierarchy that includes Landing Event.

### FAQ 10

**Question: what is the difference between Hierarchy 6 and Hierarchy 7? Why does hierarchy 6 contain FO table if FO is not strictly part of the hierarchy?**

Hierarchy 6 differs from Hierarchy 7 on the level of confidence existing on some characteristics of the samples and trip they came from. Hierarchy 6 should only be used in situations where trip information is well known and where samples collected can be unequivocally assigned to a certain area, gear and trip. This is only possible when trips involve a single gear and fishing area, and it is known that catch does not remain on-board vessels when they land (e.g., small-scale fisheries); Conversely, in Hierarchy 7 – a much more common alternative - a landing event may come from a trip that fished in more than one area or with more than one gear; and it is assumed that landing events samples may only partially represent the catch retained during a single trip (some catch may have been retained on board and not landed; transhipment may have occurred ahead of landing).

Hierarchy 6 contains FO table (and requires it set to “T” aggregation level) so that samples collected under this hierarchy have characteristics like area and gear unequivocally associated to them. Note that contrary to Hierarchy 7 area reported under hierarchy 6 is not dominant.

### FAQ 11

**Question: why are area, gear, and some other auxiliary variables defined as “Dominant” in LandingEvent table?**

It is not infrequent that fishing trips of medium and large-scale vessels span more than one area/rectangle or use more than one gear. When samples are collected at-sea after individual fishing operations, auxiliary information (e.g., area and gear characteristics) associated to individual samples is exactly known. This situation contrasts with onshore sampling of Landing Events that may contain specimens caught in multiple fishing operations. Such situation leads to difficulties in the determination of e.g. the area or gear that caught the individual fish, which limits some uses of the data [e.g., in stock discrimination or selectivity-related studies]. The RDBES accommodates and highlights these uncertainties by defining area, gear and other auxiliary variables present in the Landing Event (LE) table as “Dominant”; and area, gear and other auxiliary variables present in the Sample table (SA) as exact (or otherwise not filled in).

**Example: Simplified example of area dominance in Landing Events and Samples. In LEid 1 an area is assigned to the Landing Event (LEid 1) but the exact area of the samples is not known, and therefore not filled in. In LEid 2 a dominant area is assigned to the Landing Event and it is known that the samples come from that area (e.g. VMS indicates only 27.3.d.28 was fished). LEid 3 represents a mixed situation – where the dominant area of the landing event is known but only partial information exists at sample level**

**View Landing Event (LE)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LEid** | **Area (M)** |
| **1** | **27.3.d.28** |
| **2** | **27.3.d.28** |

**View Sample (SA)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **LEid** | **SAid** | **Weight** | **Area (O)** |
| **1** | **1** | **100** |  |
| **1** | **2** | **20** |  |
| **2** | **3** | **150** | **27.3.d.28** |
| **2** | **4** | **50** | **27.3.d.28** |
| **3** | **5** | **100** | **27.3.d.28** |
| **3** | **6** | **50** | **27.3.d.27** |
| **3** | **7** | **20** |  |

**Example: Simplified example gear dominance in Landing Events and Samples. In LEid 1 a dominant gear is assigned to the landing (GNS) but the exact gear of individual samples is not known (not filled in). In LEid 2 a dominant gear is assigned to the landing (GNS) and the exact gear of individual trips is also known (only 1 GNS was used in the trip). In LEid 3 a dominant gear is assigned to the landing (GNS) and exact gear of individual samples is known (GNS, LLS, FPO) for all samples but one (SAid 8).**

**View Landing Event (LE)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LEid** | **Gear (M)** |
| **1** | **GNS** |
| **2** | **GNS** |
| **3** | **GNS** |

**View Sample (SA)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **LEid** | **Said** | **Weight** | **Gear (O)** |
| **1** | **1** | **100** |  |
| **1** | **2** | **20** |  |
| **2** | **3** | **150** | **GNS** |
| **2** | **4** | **50** | **GNS** |
| **3** | **5** | **100** | **GNS** |
| **3** | **6** | **50** | **LLS** |
| **3** | **7** | **10** | **FPO** |
| **3** | **8** | **10** |  |

### FAQ 12

**Question:** In previous years my sampling protocol did not specify a species list (or it was too general, e.g., *commercial fish*). How should I specify this in the RDBES?:

These type of situations is quite common: e.g., in a specific programme observers were instructed to record all commercial species and they are confident that they always recorded the main ICES stocks but there is no consensus if they always screened the samples for some stocks which data only recently is being requested (e.g., a specific ray or cephalopod). How then to assign a species list to previous samples? The guideline is that only the species that one is confident were always on the protocol should be on the species list (i.e., only put on the list the species to which 0s can confidently assigned when they were absent). All other species, which one is not sure of, can and should still be uploaded to the RDBES but not be included in the list. By being outside the list they will be automatically flagged as uncertain.

### FAQ 13

**Question:** I have a species list but I found that in a group of trips my observers made a dubious interpretation (e.g., some groups were not consistently recorded)? Can I indicate this in the RDBES?

Yes. If for some reason in a specific set of trips the protocol was interpreted differently, you can declare for that subset of trips a special species list that includes only the subset of species consistently recorded in them. For the remainder, you can state the original *de facto* species list in your protocols.

### FAQ 14

**Question:** Is the RDBES prepared to receive data from marine litter?

Not yet. ICES has a EG dealing directly with marine litter (WGML) and litter data can in principle also be included in the RDBES in a way similar to observations from fish and by-catch. However this is beyond the current scope of RDBES. Albeit it is theoretically possible to obtain estimates of marine litter from commercial samples (e.g., from at-sea observations or analysis fish stomachs), few countries are known to collect these data and there is no routine request to ICES for estimates of marine litter from commercial fisheries.

### FAQ 15

**Question:** If some species are transhipped during an observed trip, how can I declare them in the RDBES?

With regards to transhipments a decision was made not to include them as catchCategory in the sample table (SA) as users can declare it as "Reason for Not Sampling" in other tables - e.g., if a specific part the catch was not sampled because of transshipment (e.g., a species) you can declare it in the Species Selection Table (e.g., under "SSreasonNotSampled"); If a non-sorted part of the catch was not sampled and you know its weight, you can declare it by stratifying the SA table with a non-sampled strata and then declare what happened under "SAreasonNotSampledFM".

### FAQ 16

**Question:** How are SSObservationActivityType “Sorting”, “Pre-sorting”, “Drop-outs” and “Slipping” defined in the different fisheries and vessel types?

WGBYC and WGCATCH are working on operational definitions for these terms in the different fisheries and types of vessels. Not all SSObservationActivityType will apply to all fisheries and vessels with some distinctions being necessary (e.g., for small-sized vessels). For purposes of the 2020 RDBES data call consider:

- Slipping – Intentional release of fish from the fishing gear before that gear is fully brought on board the fishing vessel (e.g., opening of a purse-seine in the water to release part of the catch)

- Drop-outs – Non-intentional release of catch from the fishing gear before that gear is fully brought on board the fishing vessel (e.g., specimens that loose themselves from hooks or meshes and fall back into the water as gear is being hauled onboard)

- Pre-sorting – catch left on deck and/or released to sea immediately after the gear is brought onboard (e.g., when cod-end is emptied in trawlers; as the hauling drum is operated in gillnetters and longliners)

- Sorting – sorting of the catch into landings and discards on deck on conveyor belt, sorting platform or on the vessel deck itself; storage of the catch unsorted (e.g., large pelagic trawlers and purse-seiners)

### FAQ 17

**Question:** We often sample a cluster of fish e.g. a box or a basket, but in some cases, we actually select a subsample of fish in an unclustered fashion e.g. selecting single fish in a randomly way throughout a haul. How can this be declared in the sample table (SA)?

**Answer:** Since each fish is considered a unit sampled, then each fish could get a row in the sample table. This would be a very tiresome way of recording this, so it is possible to group the fish into one row and the using SAunitType = ‘individual units’ to declare that these units are unclustered.

### FAQ 18

**Question:** A common approach to sampling fish from e.g. a haul at-sea would be to take an amount of fish (kg) out of the total amount of fish (kg). Such sampling protocols does not identify how the haul is divided into sampling units, unlike sampling via e.g. baskets or time, so how should this be handled in the sample table (SA) in respect to selection method, selection probability (*p)*, inclusion probability (π) and Estimation of CV’s? A variation of this would be that the sampling protocol states that only a single unit (e.g. basket of fish) should be subsampled, or it actually states that several units should be subsampled, but only the amount of fish (kg) in the subsample and the total amount of fish (kg) is recorded, no information about basket sampled and basket total are recorded.

**Answer:** Kg subsampled/kg total is not an inclusion probability but just a proportion. The inclusion probability is the probability that a sampling unit (here the kg subsample) is included in the final sample of n sampling units.

Say, the haul consists of a total weight TW and sample weight SW, where SW ≤ TW.

There are two possible ways to handle the issue:

1. The haul consists of approximately N=⌊TW/SW⌋ (where ⌊*a*⌋ is the floor function, the largest integer smaller than *a*) possible sampling units. One unit, i.e. n=1, was selected at random and without replacement (SRSWOR). Hence, the selection and inclusion probabilities are the same and equal to 1/N. There is no such thing as a joint inclusion probability since there is only one unit was sampled and the variance is 0. This is probably the more accurate approach in the sense that it reflects the actual sampling design, but there will not be any way of measuring sampling variability. So for the example if 100 kg was sampled out of 547 kg, then N = floor(547/100) = 5 and πi = 1/5 = 0.2 and *p*i = 1/5 = 0.2. In this case the fish are considered a cluster.
2. The haul, TW, consists of N fish, where N is unknown. N would be estimated using either (a) length-weight relationships and proportions at length from the sample, (b) by dividing the total weight TW by the mean weight of a fish or (c) N=⌊TW/SW⌋\*n. Now, SW consists of n sampled fish where n is known but a random number. What is often done when one wants to determine both selection and inclusion probabilities of units sampled is to assume (a) the number of fish to be sampled, n, is a fixed number (i.e. you planned it) and (b) the fish were sampled at random and with replacement (SRSWR). If these 2 assumptions are reasonable, then the selection probability is *p*i = 1/N, the inclusion probability is πi = 1-(1-1/N)^n, and the pairwise joint inclusion probability is given by πij = 1-2(1-1/N)^n+(1-2/N)^n. In this approach, all of the numbers used in the calculations of the probabilities are approximate but you can also estimate a sampling variance for the estimated quantities of interest. In this case the fish are considered to be unclustered.

Answer adopted from ICES, 2020[[3]](#footnote-4)

### FAQ 19

**Question: I have selected a fixed set of units that I routinely sample (e.g., always the same ports or weeks of the year). How should these be entered in the RDBES?**

This topic is scheduled to be discussed by a WGCATCH intersessional subgroup during 2020. For immediate purposes of the 2020 RDBES data call the core group provisional advice on this issue is that total number of units and total number of sampled units are set equal, method set to “NPEJ” and probability of inclusion set to 1. See the following examples:

* Country A routinely samples 7 ports out of 20 available. In the location table (LO) it should report 7 rows where totalN=7 ports, n=7 ports, method = NPEJ, and probInclusion=1
* Country B routinely samples 40 weeks out of 52 available in the year. In the temporal table (TE) it should report 40 rows where totalN=40 weeks, n=40 weeks, method = NPEJ, and probInclusion=1

### FAQ 20

**Question: When in an onboard trip the length frequencies may be collected at haul level but the sampling goals in terms of number of ages that observers aim to collect per length-class is set at trip level. How should this information be entered in the RDBES?**

The situation described is one of quota-sampling for ages at trip-level and will requires careful documentation so it can be correctly signaled to those carrying out estimation. Two variants are known to occur:

1. The information about which hauls the individual fish are coming from is not recorded and stored, so it is not possible to link the individual fish to a specific haul
2. The information about which hauls the individual fish are coming from is recorded and stored, so it is possible to link the individual fish to a specific haul

In the case of situation 1, the FO table should contain the rows of individual hauls (with FOaggregationLevel’=’H’) and an extra row for the trip (FOaggregationLevel’=’T’). The “H” rows will be connected to a SA row with lower hierarchy B (= only length frequency) where the length-frequencies collected in each haul can be recorded. The “T” row will be connected to a SA row with lower hierarchy C (= only bio sampling). In the SA table there will be weights in all samples that respect to the individuals sampled per haul for length frequency (hierarchy B), but not in the ones aggregated under the ‘T’ record (hierarchy C). It is important that in the SA table the selection method used for the biological samples (hierarchy C) is "NPCLQS-T" so estimators know that quota sampling took place at trip level.

In the case of situation 2, the FO table should only contain the rows of individual hauls (with FOaggregationLevel’=’H’). Those “H” rows will be connected to a SA row with lower hierarchy B (= only length frequency) where the length-frequencies collected in each haul are to be recorded. With regards to ages, two things can happen. In both cases Hierarchy C is used, sampling method is set to "NPCLQS-T", and the weights correspond to the individuals sampled:

2a. The specimens sampled were taken from the same sample as the length frequency: one subsample is placed under the length-frequency sample.

2b. The specimens sampled were taken from an additional sample other than the sample used for length frequency: one additional sample is open.

### FAQ 21

**Question: When samples are taken with SRSWOR, should** NumTotal **and other totals (e.g., weights) be reported as decreasing with every iteration/sample that is taken?**

Example of situation: Suppose n = 2 samples of w = 5kg each are taken using SRSWOR from a total catch of N=10 units and W = 50kg. Since SRSWOR is used, the 1st sample is taken from N=50 and W = 50kg, the 2nd sample from N= 10-9 = 9 units and W = 50-5 = 45 kg. How should this be declared in the RDBES? Should NumTotal andTotal Weight be reported to be changing between samples?... OR it it more correct to report the totals as N = 10 and W = 50 kg in all successive samples?

The correct solution to the above situation from an RDBES perspective is to report N = 10 and W = 50 kg in all successive samples that are taken. To clarify this consider the following lines of reasoning:

* NumTotal is defined as the number of units in the stratum/cluster, staying the same for all samples in SRSWOR - so it makes sense to define aspects like total weights in consistent/similar manner
* The probability of inclusion [SAinclusionProb] of each row under SRSWOR is 2/10 [there are N=10 units of 5kg -> 50/5=10]. This is the value that enters HT estimators.
* With regards to probability of selection [SAselectionProb]: it is 1/10 for the first unit, 1/9 for the second unit, and so on. The prob of selection is not what we will use in HT design-based estimation of the SRSWOR, but for other purposes it can be calculated via the sequence number present in the SA (and all other tables). That number is defined as "The sequence number identify the selections made with in each strata and cluster combination. Preferably ***representing the order of the selections.***"
* When one mentions sampling 10/50, then 10/50, one is approximating the probability of inclusion using the weight
* When one mentions sampling 5/50 then 5/45, and so on, one is approximating the probability of selection using the weight
* Note that the reduction in variance that stems from the increase in sampling fraction with each iteration is captured by the finite-population correction used in the SRSWOR variance formula.

### FAQ 22

**Question: If a census is attempted but not achieved, how should that be recorded in RDBES?**

When the sampling method is CENSUS but a census was not achieved, the CENSUS sampling method should still be used, and the *numberSampled* should contain the actual number sampled and will be less than the *numberTotal*. We encourage recording non-responses.

### FAQ 23

**Question: During concurrent sampling of landings or discards, I did not finish the sampling of all species in my species list due to e.g., time limitations. How should I report this situation?**

Set *SSuseCalcZero* to “No” so that zeros are not calculated for the remainder species you did not collect information on.

### FAQ 24

**Question: If I select the species I will sample (e.g., via SRSWOR), how should I report the variable SSuseCalcZero?**

Set *SSuseCalcZero* to “No” to avoid that the species you did not select are not assumed absent during calculations.

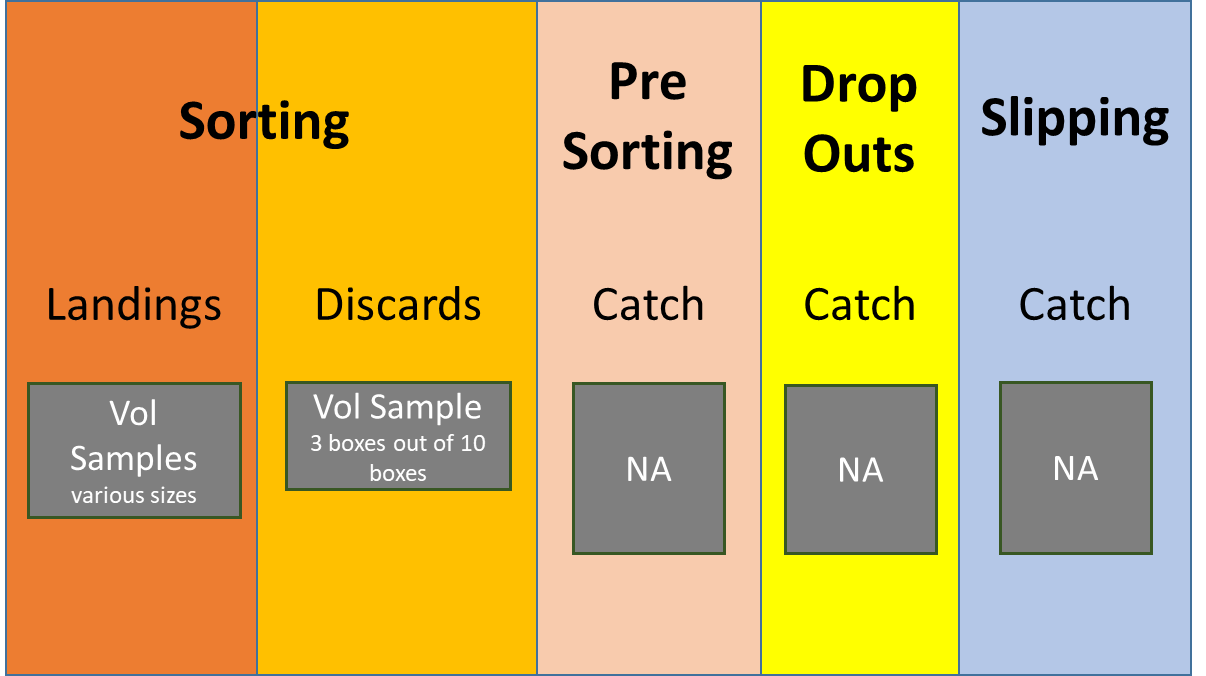
### FAQ 25

**Question: If the sampling unit was measured in terms of a number of consecutive minutes. How should that be recorded?**

If a single sample was taken from a certain number of minutes of a process, then *numberSampled* should be set to 1, and *numberTotal* should be left empty (since this might not be an integer), and instead report the estimated inclusion probability.

# Annex IV: Incidental bycatch and slipping

**Situation 1:** In a trawler, observers take their volume samples from the conveyor belt (separate samples on discards and landings) but do not observe other areas of the boat, e.g., they are not present at cod-end opening. All species in the samples are identified and weighed (species list B = “all species in sample”)



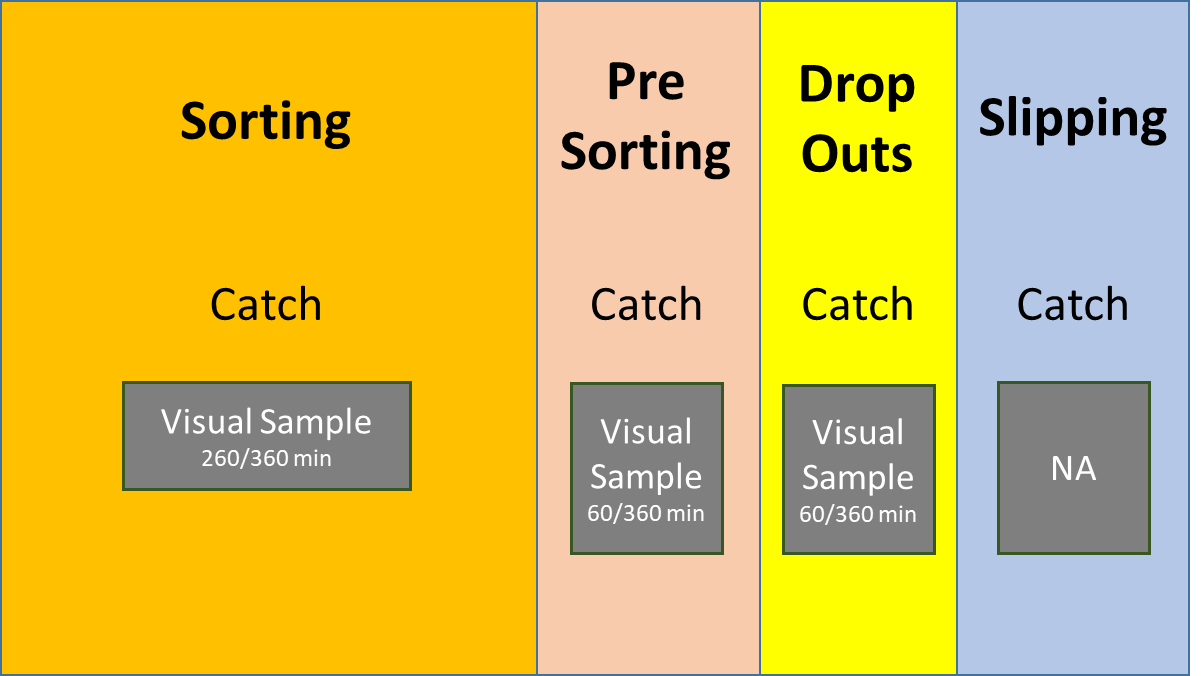
FO Table

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FOid** | **...** | **FOobservationCode** | **Observation code explained** |
| 1 | ... | So | only Sorting observed |
| ... | ... | ... | ... |

SS Table

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SSid** | **Foid** | **...** | **SSobservationActivity** | **SScatchFraction** | **SSobservationType** | **SSsppListName** |
| 1 | 1 | ... | SORT | LAND | 1 | B |
| 2 | 1 | ... | SORT | DIS | 1 | B |
| ... |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Situation 2:** In a gill-netter, observers screen visually the sorting of the catch for approximately 260 min out of the 360 minutes the operation takes. They also spend some time (60 min) on the edge of the boat observing the net being hauled and counting specimens that fall back into the water or in the deck close to the drum as the net is being hauled. They make their observations with regards to the species in a list A.



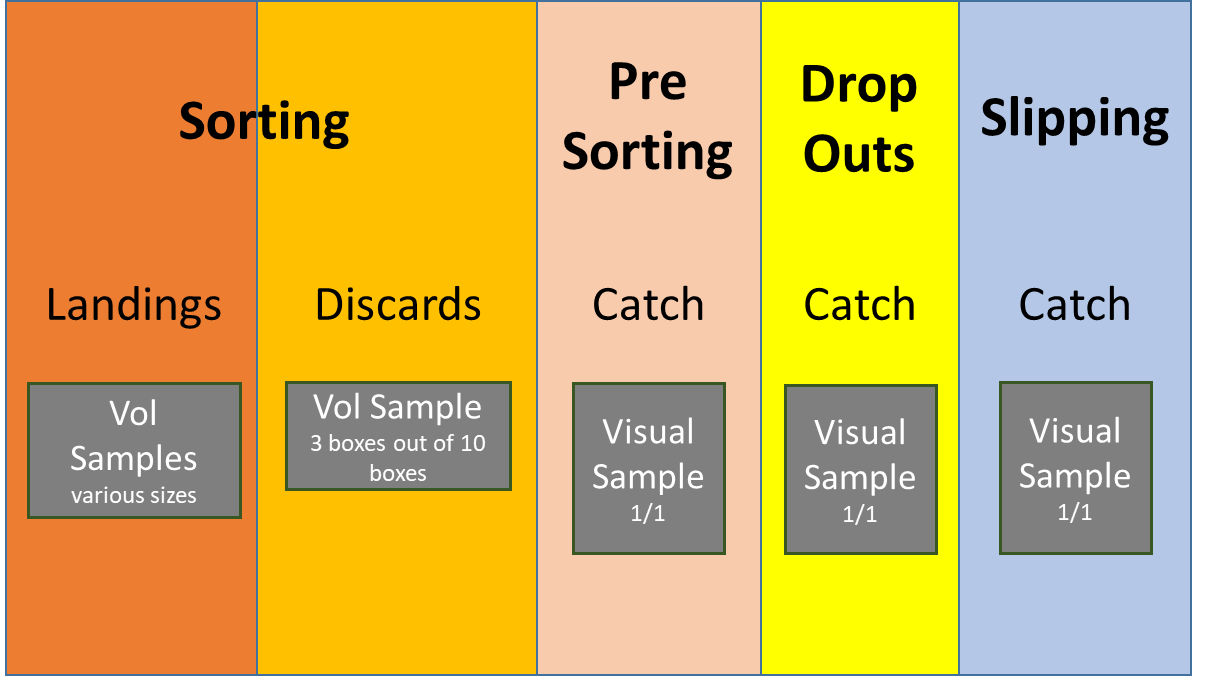
FO Table

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FOid** | **...** | **FOobservationCode** | **Observation code explained** |
| 1 | ... | DrPrSo | Drop-outs, Presorting and Sorting observed |
| 2 | ... | DrPrSo | Drop-outs, Presorting and Sorting observed |
| ... | ... | ... | ... |

SS Table

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SSid** | **Foid** | **...** | **SSobservationActivity** | **SScatchFraction** | **SSobservationType** | **SSsppListName** |
| 1 | 1 | ... | DROP | CATCH | 2 | A |
| 2 | 1 | ... | PRESORT | CATCH | 2 | A |
| 3 | 1 | … | SORT | CATCH | 2 | A |
| 4 | 2 | ... | DROP | CATCH | 2 | A |
| 5 | 2 | ... | PRESORT | CATCH | 2 | A |
| 6 | 2 | … | SORT | CATCH | 2 | A |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |

**Situation 3:** In a purse-seiner, observers visually screen the entire closure of the net and the hauling of the catch onboard with regards to the occurrence (or not) of individuals from a short-list of incidental by-catch species (List A). Throughout they pay attention and record the occurrence of slipping and drop-outs. Then they take volume samples from both landings and discards where they weight all species found (list B).



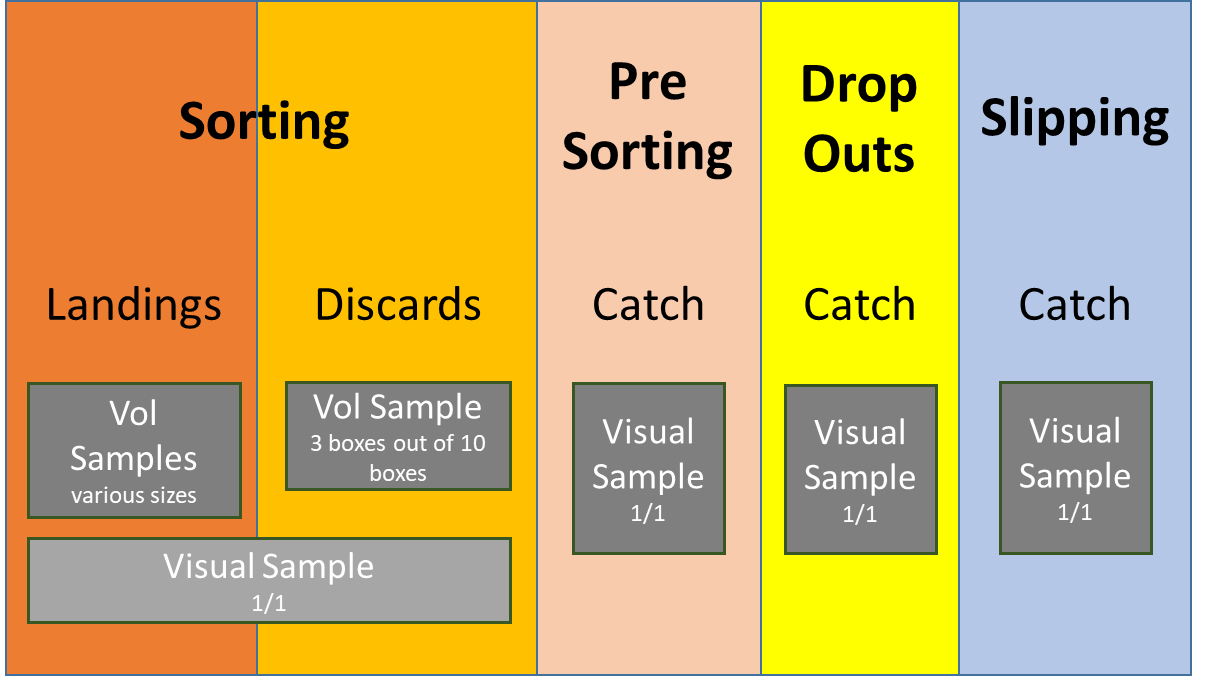
FO Table

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FOid** | **...** | **FOobservationCode** | **Observation code explained** |
| 1 | ... | SlDrPrSo | Slipping, Drop-outs, Presorting and Sorting observed |
| ... | ... | ... | ... |

SS Table

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SSid** | **Foid** | **...** | **SSobservationActivity** | **SScatchFraction** | **SSobservationType** | **SSsppListName** |
| 1 | 1 | ... | SLIP | CATCH | 2 | A |
| 2 | 1 | … | DROP | CATCH | 2 | A |
| 3 | 1 | … | PRESORT | CATCH | 2 | A |
| 2 | 1 | ... | SORT | LAND | 1 | B |
| 3 | 1 | ... | SORT | DIS | 1 | B |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |

**Situation 4:** Similar to situation 3 but observers also visually screen the occurrence (or not) of individuals from a short-list of incidental by-catch species (List A) during the sorting of the catch.



FO Table

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FOid** | **...** | **FOobservationCode** | **Observation code explained** |
| 1 | ... | SlDrPrSo | Slipping, Drop-outs, Presorting and Sorting observed |
| ... | ... | ... | ... |

SS Table

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SSid** | **Foid** | **...** | **SSobservationActivity** | **SScatchFraction** | **SSobservationType** | **SSsppListName** |
| 1 | 1 | ... | SLIP | CATCH | 2 | A |
| 2 | 1 | … | DROP | CATCH | 2 | A |
| 3 | 1 | … | PRESORT | CATCH | 2 | A |
| 4 | 1 | ... | SORT | CATCH | 2 | A |
| 5 | 1 | ... | SORT | LAND | 1 | B |
| 6 | 1 | ... | SORT | DIS | 1 | B |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |

# Annex V: Algorithms for the calculation of both inclusion and selection probabilities

By Mary Christman (ICES, 2020[[4]](#footnote-5))

**Probabilities at a given level in a sampling scheme**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Sampling** | **Selection Probability** | **Inclusion Probability ()** |
| SRSWR |  |  |
| SRSWOR | See below |  |
| UPSWR |  |  |
| UPSWOR | See below |  |

Notation: let

number of elements in the population, i.e. the population “size”,

the number of elements to be sampled, i.e. the sample size,

WITH REPLACEMENT

the probability of selection with replacement of the element in the population, , where

WITHOUT REPLACEMENT

the order in which the element is sampled from the population when sampling is without replacement

probability that the unit is selected on the draw when draws have occurred, . For example, is the probability that the unit was selected on the draw (hence the ) when draws have occurred so far

conditional probability that the element is selected on the draw given that the elements where selected prior to the draw, e.g. is the probability that the element is selected on the draw given that the element was selected on the first draw.

the unconditional probability that the element is selected at the draw where the summation notation indicates that the sum is over all possible sets of () where the are different integers between 1 and and none equal . For each ,

Example calculations using SRSWOR

1. The probability of the element being selected on the first draw is

and the probability of not being selected in the first draw is

1. The probability that the element is not selected on the first draw but is selected on the second draw is
2. The probability that the element is selected on the draw is
3. The inclusion probability for the element is

Note that the probabilities are identical only because every element has the same chance of being selected at each draw, so the equations for the probabilities at each draw are simplified. This is not the case for unequal probabilities.

# Annex VI: Examples of the use of Stratification and Clustering

The RDBES provides the possibility of declaring stratification and/or clustering at each level of the sampling hierarchy.

Stratified sampling considers the sampling units of a sampling level as mutually exclusive sets that are all sampled independently with a sometimes stratum-specific sampling effort. When stratified sampling is used it is fundamental for design-based estimation that every stratum has been sampled because separate estimates are to be calculated for each stratum that will later be added together to obtain the total or mean for that sampling level. A simple example of stratification is the spatial stratification of ports along the coast of a country into, e.g., three regions – North, Centre and South (e.g., in LO table). Each of the regions is a stratum and each port belongs to only one of the regions. During sampling, some ports from *each of* *all three regions* are selected for sampling and estimates for the country built from the individual estimates of each strata.

Similarly to stratified sampling, cluster sampling also considers the sampling units of a sampling level as mutually exclusive groups of units; but contrary to stratified sampling not all these sets are expected to be sampled – only a subset of them is selected for sampling (e.g., randomly). In design based estimation, the estimates from sampled clusters are expanded to the total number of clusters in much the same way as the average or total from a simple random sample are expanded to population size. A simple example of clustering is temporal clustering of days (TE table). Suppose that days in a calendar year are divided into weeks (clusters). The days in each week are mutually exclusive (i.e., each day belongs to one week only). Random sample is used to select a few weeks and in each selected week some days are sampled. If all days in the week are sampled, the design is 1-stage cluster sampling; if only some days are sampled (e.g., 3 randomly selected days in the 7 available) then the design is said to be 2-stage cluster sampling, please see next page.

**Example 1: No clustering (‘N’)**

**In Country XYZ the sampling of landings involves a stage of port selection. The ports are organized in three strata: "North" (N = 10 ports), "Center" (N = 20 ports), "South" (N = 50 ports). In a specific time period (e.g., a quarter) 2 ports are sampled from each of these strata.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LocationId | LOrecordType | LOstratification | LOclustering | LOstratumName | LOclusterName | LOnumberTotal | LOnumberSampled | LOselectionMethod | LOinclusionProb | LOnumberTotalClusters | LOnumberSampledClusters | LOselectionMethodCluster | LOinclusionProbCluster | LOunitName |
| 1 | LO | Y | N | North | --- | 10 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,2 | --- | --- | --- | --- | Port L01 |
| 2 | LO | Y | N | North | --- | 10 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,2 | --- | --- | --- | --- | Port L06 |
| 3 | LO | Y | N | Centre | --- | 20 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,1 | --- | --- | --- | --- | Port M07 |
| 4 | LO | Y | N | Centre | --- | 20 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,1 | --- | --- | --- | --- | Port M19 |
| 5 | LO | Y | N | South | --- | 50 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,04 | --- | --- | --- | --- | Port S22 |
| 6 | LO | Y | N | South | --- | 50 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,04 | --- | --- | --- | --- | Port S34 |

**Example 2: 1-stage cluster sampling without stratification (‘1C’)**

**In Country Z the sampling of landings involves a stage of port selection. The ports are organized in three geographical clusters: "North" (3 ports), "Center" (4 ports), "South" (5 ports). In a specific time period 2 clusters are selected for sampling and all ports in each cluster are visited. In the example, cluster "Center" and "South" were selected in the sampling and fully inventoried.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LocationId | LOrecordType | LOstratification | LOclustering | LOstratumName | LOclusterName | LOnumberTotal | LOnumberSampled | LOselectionMethod | LOinclusionProb | LOnumberTotalClusters | LOnumberSampledClusters | LOselectionMethodCluster | LOinclusionProbCluster | LOunitName |
| 1 | LO | N | 1C | None | Center | 4 | 4 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port C1 |
| 2 | LO | N | 1C | None | Center | 4 | 4 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port C2 |
| 3 | LO | N | 1C | None | Center | 4 | 4 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port C3 |
| 4 | LO | N | 1C | None | Center | 4 | 4 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port C4 |
| 5 | LO | N | 1C | None | South | 5 | 5 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port S1 |
| 6 | LO | N | 1C | None | South | 5 | 5 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port S2 |
| 7 | LO | N | 1C | None | South | 5 | 5 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port S3 |
| 8 | LO | N | 1C | None | South | 5 | 5 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port S4 |
| 9 | LO | N | 1C | None | South | 5 | 5 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port S5 |

**Example 3: 2-stage cluster sampling without stratification (‘2C’)**

**In Country X the sampling of landings involves a stage of port selection. The ports are organized in three geographical clusters: "North" (15 ports), "Center" (20 ports), "South" (10 ports). In a specific time period (e.g., a week) 2 clusters are selected and 2 ports visited in each of them. In the example, cluster "Center" and "South" were selected in the 1st stage of sampling and ports C16, C07, S02, and S14 were selected in the 2nd stage.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LocationId | LOrecordType | LOstratification | LOclustering | LOstratumName | LOclusterName | LOnumberTotal | LOnumberSampled | LOselectionMethod | LOinclusionProb | LOnumberTotalClusters | LOnumberSampledClusters | LOselectionMethodCluster | LOinclusionProbCluster | LOunitName |
| 1 | LO | N | 2C | None | Center | 20 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | C16 |
| 2 | LO | N | 2C | None | Center | 20 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | C07 |
| 3 | LO | N | 2C | None | South | 10 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,2 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | S02 |
| 4 | LO | N | 2C | None | South | 10 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,2 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | S14 |

**Example 4: Stratified sampling of 2-stage clusters (‘S2C’)**

**In Country Y the sampling of landings involves a stage of port selection. The ports are organized in two geographical strata: "North" and "South". In the stratum "North" there are 8 municipalities (with different numbers of ports each). In stratum "South" there are 12 municipalities (also with different numbers of ports each). In a specific time period (e.g., a week) 2 municipalities are selected in stratum "North" (clusters: NM2 and NM6) and in each municipality 3 ports are randomly selected and visited (NM2 01, NM2 06 and NM2 03; NM6 02, NM6 06, and NM6 03); In the same time period 3 municipalities are selected in stratum "South" (clusters: SM11, SM1 and SM5) and in each of them 2 ports are randomly selected and visited (SM11 03 and SM11 04; SM1 01 and SM1 03; SM5 04 and SM5 05).**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LocationId | LOrecordType | LOstratification | LOclustering | LOstratumName | LOclusterName | LOnumberTotal | LOnumberSampled | LOselectionMethod | LOinclusionProb | LOnumberTotalClusters | LOnumberSampledClusters | LOselectionMethodCluster | LOinclusionProbCluster | LOunitName |
| 1 | LO | Y | S2C | North | NM2 | 7 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,4286 | 8 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | NM2 01 |
| 2 | LO | Y | S2C | North | NM2 | 7 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,4286 | 8 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | NM2 06 |
| 3 | LO | Y | S2C | North | NM2 | 7 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,4286 | 8 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | NM2 03 |
| 4 | LO | Y | S2C | North | NM6 | 6 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,5 | 8 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | NM6 02 |
| 5 | LO | Y | S2C | North | NM6 | 6 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,5 | 8 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | NM6 06 |
| 6 | LO | Y | S2C | North | NM6 | 6 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,5 | 8 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | NM6 03 |
| 7 | LO | Y | S2C | South | SM11 | 4 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,5 | 12 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | SM11 03 |
| 8 | LO | Y | S2C | South | SM11 | 4 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,5 | 12 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | SM11 04 |
| 9 | LO | Y | S2C | South | SM1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,6667 | 12 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | SM1 01 |
| 10 | LO | Y | S2C | South | SM1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,6667 | 12 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | SM1 03 |
| 11 | LO | Y | S2C | South | SM5 | 5 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,4 | 12 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | SM5 04 |
| 12 | LO | Y | S2C | South | SM5 | 5 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,4 | 12 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | SM5 05 |

# Annex VII - Selection methods (the whole annex section is new)

By Edvin Fuglebakk, Annica de Groote, Chun Chen, Kirsten Birch Håkansson, Liz Clarke,

Nuno Prista and Jon Helge Vølstad

## Data use

All estimation assumes representativity of samples at some point. Even when complex models throw in strong assumptions to mitigate known or potential problems in sampling that assumption is present. As long as there are parameters to estimate they will be sensitive to whether the sample is representative or not of some partition of the population. As such, non-probabilistic codes for selection methods should not inform on whether the assumption of random sampling is necessary, it always is. They can, at best, hint at what kind of assumptions may mitigate bias or under-dispersion in samples, and what kind of caveats should be communicated to recipients of estimates.

It should be a design goal for the RDBES to minimize the need for consulting excessive amounts of documentation and/or burdening data submitters or programme managers with questions. Such situation is possible when probabilistic methods are used and the selection procedures were highly controlled. With regards to non-probabilistic methods there are different approaches in literature with regards to non-probabilistic sampling and consensus reached in terminology and handling of those samples during estimation are still quite coarse (at least when compared to the terminology and handling of probabilistic samples). It is also difficult to decide on the level of detail a terminology system for non-probabilistic selection methods should have in order to meet diverse end-user needs. To deal with this situation the codes for non-probabilistic methods are informative for estimation and other analysis but focus primarily on the sample selection procedure itself, not attempting to differentiate issues or ease decisions that the analyst is only safe to make upon consultation with data providers.

## Use of selection methods during estimation in the RDBES

As mentioned above the main purpose of the selection method it to convey the sample selection procedure to the person responsible for the estimation and hopefully convey meaningful information about the appropriated estimator.

The estimator (person) can always change a selection methods, e.g. from a none-probabilistic to a probabilistic, in the data extracted, not in the database itself, so it is possible to use the design based estimation function being developed for the RDBES. For transparency in the estimation process WKRDBEST have suggested that manipulation like this should be apparent in a report (R markdown) associated with the final estimates.

## Probabilistic selection

When selection methods are probabilistic, the stages of sampling (the sampling hierarchy) are accurately described, probabilities of selection are known (exactly or approximately), and non-response is fully documented in the RDBES. In such circumstances, it is reasonably safe that statistical estimators are selected without further consultation with data providers. For this to happen codes for probabilistic selection methods should have strict definitions, and not be declared unless selection is actually probabilistically controlled.

Typically probabilistic selection methods involve some kind of random number generation. Such level of randomization can generally be implemented at national labs for the first levels of sampling hierarchies (e.g., vessel or port selection) using e.g., Excel or R functions. Their implementation in sampling levels like haul selection (within a trip), box selection (within a market day) generally results much more complicated with most countries resorting to non-probabilistic approaches in such cases. Still, cases exists where the formality of probability sampling takes place at those levels (e.g., use of an electronic logbook lottery for haul selection; use of random number tables for box or fish selection).

The probabilistic methods currently accepted in RDBES are given in the main text for the RDBES documentation. These encompass several forms of sampling involving equal and unequal probability sampling with and without replacement and systematic sampling.

## Non-Probabilistic selection

When selection methods are not probabilistic, they are considered non-probabilistic. In such situations, some sampling units in the frame may have null or unknown selection probability.In such circumstances, the analyst should consult with data providers and/or programme managers ahead of deciding on the estimation procedures. Because when defined in such way the use of non-probabilistic methods becomes prevalent and the required consultations conflict with the design goal for the RDBES to minimize the need for extra documentation and/or consultations during much needed estimation, a consensus needed to be reached between form and usability in terms of declaration of non-probabilistic methods in the RDBES. That consensus is present in the inclusion in the RDBES of an intermediate set of codes, non-probabilistic in nature but not in use, that exclude, to some degree, the estimator from the responsibility of consulting documentation or data providers, while minimizing the risk of incorrect estimation. Those codes are reserved for situations where some sort of formal process was used in sample selection that can be considered to reasonably approximate (i.e., “quasi”-approximate) a probabilistic selection method.

### Quasi probabilistic selection methods (NPQSRSWOR, NPQSRSWR and NPSYSS)

These selection methods approximate probabilistic sampling methods, but **no formal probabilistic process** is put in place that secures it. Sampling institutions may be consulted for evaluating fitness for purpose, but in general, an appropriate estimator can be selected without further consultation with data providers.

#### Quasi Simple Random Sampling (NPQSRSWOR, NPQSRSWR)

The selection of sampling units is considered by those responsible for the sampling to provide approximately random selection (with or without replacement), with approximately equal probability of selection. Sampling institutions may be consulted for evaluating fitness for purpose. Sampling is considered to have approximated SRS but no formal probabilistic process was put in place that secures it.

**Examples:**

1. Blind choice of boxes at a market or vessels at a port. There is a sampling protocol and it is followed. Its intention is to take a random sample, but no formal process is in place that effectively guarantees that all elements in frame can be selected and have the probability of selections that is considered for them.
2. Selection of a haul not to be sampled during a trip. There is a sampling protocol that effectively guarantees all hauls can be selected and sets guidelines meant to avoid, e.g., it should not “always” be night hauls the ones left unsampled.
3. Sampling of 100 individuals per species from a haul for length frequency by following a protocol that includes specific guidelines and advice to avoid size selection (e.g., mix the sample, do not select by hand)

#### Quasi Systematic Sampling (NPQSYSS)

The selection of sampling units is considered by those responsible for the sampling to provide approximately systematic sampling without replacement. Here it is required that the interval between the samples is specified in the sampling protocol e.g. take a sample per each 10th. What would often be missing is a formal probabilistic process for selecting the start or the start is always equal to a certain number e.g. the 1st, and/or secure exact periodicity, e.g., the protocol states sample every 10 and a few samples are distanced 9 or 11 units.

**Examples:**

1. Systematic sampling of boxes or trips at a market with an approximate random start point and/or with approximate interval length in the sampling. The intention is to have a random start and constant periodicity, but no formal process for doing this is in place, so often the start is ad-hoc and periodicity varies slightly throughout the sample.
2. Systematic sampling of fish with a non-random start e.g. always selecting the first and then sample with a fixed interval. A institute has the following protocol for subsampling of fish, which gives approximately systematic sampling of ages
   1. Lay a sample of fish on a table per length class (like a histogram), pick the 1st fish in the histogram (the smallest one), then pick each 3rd fish.

### Judgement sampling (NPJS)

The selection of sampling units is done without replacement and is considered by the institution responsible for the sampling to include typical units of the population, i.e., units where the parameters of interest are expected to be close to the median or mean of the population, but that do not necessarily represent the variation in the population with regards to those parameters (and likely also to others). This consideration may be limited to a particular intended use of the data and not be applicable to all other usages. Sampling institutions should be consulted ahead of estimation for evaluating fitness for purpose.

Many non-probabilistic sampling designs exist that incorporate knowledge and intuition in their design in order to avoid known sources of bias. They aim to obtain representative samples, but the term ‘representativity’ may be used in an informal sense, and may imply restrictions on use of the data. Knowledge and judgment of which sampling units are in some sense similar may be used to inform selection, and this concept of similarity is necessarily informing about what the samples are intended for. For example, two vessels may be assumed similar in terms of age composition of target species, while they may have declared policies on discards that likely makes them dissimilar with respect to discards. Similarly, decisions in judgment sampling may be informed by specific estimation methods used, and their applicability to other methods may be limited. Therefore, the declaration of representativity is both subjective and often implicitly constrained to some intended use.

The tradition of providing point estimates without variance estimates may also influence the use of the term ‘representativity’. On the one side a selection of very typical samples may be considered representative because they are considered to give a good approximation for mean and total estimates, even if they are likely to underestimate variance. On the other side, when judgements are made based on point estimates with no associated variance, it is the certainty of the judgement itself that is put question.

Indicators of bias in sampling may also be analysed after the fact, and this may inform judgment of representativity even when sample selection is completely uncontrolled. Only known sources of bias can be analysed in this way.

NPJS should be used when the sampling institution has a selection protocol that involved a justified reason to believe that the selected sample consist of typical sampling units from the sampling frame. If the reason for that “belief” is that the process of selection is random or quasi-random, NPJS should not be used and codes reflecting what kind of selection should be considered instead (e.g., NPQSRSWOR). If the institution responsible for sampling doed not have a procedure in place that objectively defines “representativity” then the code NPCS should be considered instead.

**Examples:**

1. An institution runs an at-sea sampling program aimed at describing the age composition of some target species. The sampling divides the fisheries in many small strata based on vessel length, gears, quarters and areas. The selection within strata is not controlled, but they consider that the fine stratification is likely to make trips within strata similar enough for estimating the age composition of landed catches. They are often not able to cover all strata, but make an effort to cover the ones with highest activity. They use knowledge to consider which gears have similar selectivity and post-stratify accordingly in order to estimate also for un-sampled strata. They have considered the potential bias-sources they think is most important and have concluded that the samples are fit for estimating age composition if the post-stratification is applied.
2. An institution receives production reports from one particular landing site which reports total catch landed in different length groups for every day throughout the year. They develop analysis and visualization tools that compares logbook records for the vessels landing at this site and those landing on other sites. The analysis indicate that the catches landed at the data-providing landing site have similar composition of gears and fishing locations and that analyse gross volume reports to check that seasonal patterns are similar between all landing sites.

### Convenience sampling (NPCS)

The selection of sampling units is not controlled, or selection is controlled by convenience of the sampler or by other purposes than estimating population parameters for a commercial fishery (observational data). Those responsible for the sampling do not consider the selection procedure approximate any of the probabilistic selection methods and a formal knowledge/judgment procedure for sample selection is also not in place. Consulting the sampling institution is necessary for evaluating fitness for purpose.

Convenience sampling samples the part of the population that is easily or cheaply accessible, without attending to its “representativity”. If some parts of the population are more conveniently accessible than the rest, there is bias in selection. There are elements of convenience-bias in most non-probabilistic sampling designs, but when factors that may bias selections are identified, they can be mitigated through sampling protocols. The code NPCS indicates that either there has been no attempt at mitigating the convenience bias (e.g., there is no protocol with guidelines to avoid it), or that those responsible for sampling are not sufficiently confident that the measures and guidelines put in place to avoid selection bias have worked during implementation.

A special kind of convenience samples are samples from sources that collect data for other purposes than estimation of parameters in commercial fisheries. This is often referred to as observational data. For example control agencies may select vessels or fishing operations based on risk models and collect length-data that may find secondary use in the RDBES.

While convenience sample typically introduces bias, this bias may be acceptably small in fortunate circumstances. Usually this cannot be verified, but post-hoc analysis may corroborate it and the code NPJS may be considered. Contrast in this respect example b) below with example b) under the section about NPJS.

**Examples:**

1. Samples collected from self-recruited or volunteer fleets and no post-hoc analysis corroborate that the bias is sufficiently small.
2. An institution receives production reports from one particular landing site which reports total catch landed in different length groups for every day throughout the year. They develop analysis and visualization tools that compares logbook records for the vessels landing at this site and those landing on other sites. The analysis indicate that the catches landed at the data-providing landing site are fishing close to this landing site and that this constitute only a small part of the fishery. They are concerned that the sample does not constitute a representative selection, but need to provide some estimate for this fishery so they use the code NPCS rather than withholding the data or defining a smaller sampling frame for these data.
3. An institution runs a port sampling program with limited funding and can only afford to visit landing sites in the immediate vicinity of their workplace, and cannot afford to perform any post-hoc analysis.
4. An institution receives discard-samples from a control agency, which select fishing operations where they expect much by-catch. The sampling design for the primary use of this data (control) is not well aligned with use for discard estimation, and no suitable post-hoc analysis has been identified that would reassure them of representativity.
5. Observers at a market select for sampling the most readily available boxes.
6. Observers onboard a fishing trip are told they can freely select one haul not to be sampled without being given bias-prevention guidelines for the selection.
7. Traditional quota sampling

### Cross-Level Quota sampling (NPCLQS-T, NPCLQS-O)

A special case of quota sampling is the kind of quota sampling that is not contained to a certain sampling unit specified in the hierarchy. For example a hierarchy may specify a selection of trips, and for each trip a selection of hauls, and for each haul a sample of fish for which length measurements are taken. But ages may be collected throughout the trip until a quota is reached at the trip level (for each age-group or length-class).

This type of sampling is prevalent in historical data and fits the RDBES data model poorly. This is because the RDBES is primarily designed to reflect the hierarchical structure of multi-level sampling programmes and in such type of sampling, sampling targets are defined disregarding some sampling-stages, i.e, across sampling levels. Accommodating for the exact declaration of such type of non-probabilistic designs would require complex changes in the RDBES that would force it to compromise its inherently probabilistic goals. This because, these age samples are typically expertly judged to be representative of the trip, but not of the haul they are recorded for, as quotas are enforced through the entire trip.

A selection restricted by a quota at the trip level and not at the level where the unit is selected is a main example of this type of sampling and ‘NPCLQS-T’ (Cross-Level Quota Sampling at the Trip level)should be stated in the selection method at the relevant level. It is conceivable that similar sampling schemes are employed at other aggregations, e.g. area and quarter. If this is the case, then the selection method should be ‘NPCLQS-O’ (Cross-Level Quota Sampling at levels Other than a trip) should be declared in the selection method at the relevant level. The coding system is designed so that it can be expanded to other cross-level characteristics if that is ever found needed.

**Examples:**

1. Sampling of 3 otoliths per length class within a trip (NPCLQS-T)
2. Sampling of 3 otoliths per length class within an quarter and area (NPCLQS-O)

## Other selection methods

### Fixed Sample (FIXED)

The selection of sampling units is fixed to a previous selection, for instance the previous years selection for annual sampling programs. The previous selection, or initial sample, is selected by a known selection method that is not purely convenience based.

In a fixed-sample design a sample is selected once and then re-used for subsequent executions of the sampling scheme. Irrespective of the selection at stake being spatial (ports) or temporal (weeks), the repetition of the sample across time has implications for interpretation of e.g. year-to-year variation and for applications in longitudinal analysis. It is therefore desirable to highlight that a fixed design is used even if the initial sample selection is well described by other codes. Those considerations are however only relevant to the extent that the initial sample is assured to be representative and FIXED should not be used if the initial sample selection is Unknown or is a convenience sample (NPCS). In that case ‘Unknown’ or NPCS should be used for all executions of the sampling scheme.

The code FIXED implies that the sample from the last execution of the sampling scheme is re-used, so the first time the sample is used it may be encoded with the selection method that reflects how that sample was selected (e.g. NPJS, NPQSRSWOR, or NPQSYSS).

In some cases a FIXED sample can be formulated as a systematic sample without randomization. For instance the months January, April, July and October will always arise from a systematic sampling rule that selects every third month starting with January. In these cases selection method should be encoded as FIXED rather than NPQSYSS, since the none-random start always result in the same selection.

It is theoretically possible to select a sample randomly with the goal of following it throughout 2 years (or more) and only then taking another sample. The RDBES was designed with annual sampling plans in mind which makes the exact declaration of such types of multi-annual sampling scheme not presently possible. In such situations users should follow the above guidelines and report the PSUs or SSUs selected as FIXED during the 2nd year and subsequent years (until a new randomization is done).

**Examples:**

1. Reference fleet: An institution recruits self-sampling vessels that meet criteria determined to give a good representation of the population. Vessels signs contracts that last several years and may be renewed for the same vessel. When a contract is not renewed, the institution will attempt to replace it by a similar vessel. The initial vessel selection may be encoded as NPJS, while subsequent years should be encoded as FIXED.
2. An institution selects some ports according to a formal randomization procedure and installs monitoring equipment that is expensive to relocate and therefore the equipment is installed for a year at the time. Estimates are made after each quarter so the sampling scheme is considered to be executed quarterly. The next year a new sample is drawn and the monitoring equipment relocated to the ports selected in the new sample. The port selection for the first quarter of each year may be encoded as SRSWOR, while subsequent quarters should be encoded as FIXED.
3. An institution randomly selects a set of weekdays to visit a market (e.g., Tuesday and Friday); those days are kept through a long period.

### Unknown (Unknown)

Sampling method not known: Use for historical records if selection method is not known. It sometimes takes a lot of time to figure out the concept behind historical data - if so this code can be used until investigated. This also allows for the inclusion of data from other sources for evaluation. Sampling institutions need to be consulted for evaluating fitness for purpose.

**Examples:**

1. An institute has market samples of boxes from 1974, but it is not known how markets and boxes were selected
2. An institute has samples from at-sea trips with observers from 1996, but it is not known how the trips was selected

**Example 1: No clustering (‘N’)**

**In Country XYZ the sampling of landings involves a stage of port selection. The ports are organized in three strata: "North" (N = 10 ports), "Center" (N = 20 ports), "South" (N = 50 ports). In a specific time period (e.g., a quarter) 2 ports are sampled from each of these strata.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LocationId | LOrecordType | LOstratification | LOclustering | LOstratumName | LOclusterName | LOnumberTotal | LOnumberSampled | LOselectionMethod | LOinclusionProb | LOnumberTotalClusters | LOnumberSampledClusters | LOselectionMethodCluster | LOinclusionProbCluster | LOunitName |
| 1 | LO | Y | N | North | --- | 10 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,2 | --- | --- | --- | --- | Port L01 |
| 2 | LO | Y | N | North | --- | 10 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,2 | --- | --- | --- | --- | Port L06 |
| 3 | LO | Y | N | Centre | --- | 20 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,1 | --- | --- | --- | --- | Port M07 |
| 4 | LO | Y | N | Centre | --- | 20 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,1 | --- | --- | --- | --- | Port M19 |
| 5 | LO | Y | N | South | --- | 50 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,04 | --- | --- | --- | --- | Port S22 |
| 6 | LO | Y | N | South | --- | 50 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,04 | --- | --- | --- | --- | Port S34 |

**Example 2: 1-stage cluster sampling without stratification (‘1C’)**

**In Country Z the sampling of landings involves a stage of port selection. The ports are organized in three geographical clusters: "North" (3 ports), "Center" (4 ports), "South" (5 ports). In a specific time period 2 clusters are selected for sampling and all ports in each cluster are visited. In the example, cluster "Center" and "South" were selected in the sampling and fully inventoried.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LocationId | LOrecordType | LOstratification | LOclustering | LOstratumName | LOclusterName | LOnumberTotal | LOnumberSampled | LOselectionMethod | LOinclusionProb | LOnumberTotalClusters | LOnumberSampledClusters | LOselectionMethodCluster | LOinclusionProbCluster | LOunitName |
| 1 | LO | N | 1C | None | Center | 4 | 4 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port C1 |
| 2 | LO | N | 1C | None | Center | 4 | 4 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port C2 |
| 3 | LO | N | 1C | None | Center | 4 | 4 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port C3 |
| 4 | LO | N | 1C | None | Center | 4 | 4 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port C4 |
| 5 | LO | N | 1C | None | South | 5 | 5 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port S1 |
| 6 | LO | N | 1C | None | South | 5 | 5 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port S2 |
| 7 | LO | N | 1C | None | South | 5 | 5 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port S3 |
| 8 | LO | N | 1C | None | South | 5 | 5 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port S4 |
| 9 | LO | N | 1C | None | South | 5 | 5 | CENSUS | 1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | Port S5 |

**Example 3: 2-stage cluster sampling without stratification (‘2C’)**

**In Country X the sampling of landings involves a stage of port selection. The ports are organized in three geographical clusters: "North" (15 ports), "Center" (20 ports), "South" (10 ports). In a specific time period (e.g., a week) 2 clusters are selected and 2 ports visited in each of them. In the example, cluster "Center" and "South" were selected in the 1st stage of sampling and ports C16, C07, S02, and S14 were selected in the 2nd stage.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LocationId | LOrecordType | LOstratification | LOclustering | LOstratumName | LOclusterName | LOnumberTotal | LOnumberSampled | LOselectionMethod | LOinclusionProb | LOnumberTotalClusters | LOnumberSampledClusters | LOselectionMethodCluster | LOinclusionProbCluster | LOunitName |
| 1 | LO | N | 2C | None | Center | 20 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | C16 |
| 2 | LO | N | 2C | None | Center | 20 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | C07 |
| 3 | LO | N | 2C | None | South | 10 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,2 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | S02 |
| 4 | LO | N | 2C | None | South | 10 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,2 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,666666667 | S14 |

**Example 4: Stratified sampling of 2-stage clusters (‘S2C’)**

**In Country Y the sampling of landings involves a stage of port selection. The ports are organized in two geographical strata: "North" and "South". In the stratum "North" there are 8 municipalities (with different numbers of ports each). In stratum "South" there are 12 municipalities (also with different numbers of ports each). In a specific time period (e.g., a week) 2 municipalities are selected in stratum "North" (clusters: NM2 and NM6) and in each municipality 3 ports are randomly selected and visited (NM2 01, NM2 06 and NM2 03; NM6 02, NM6 06, and NM6 03); In the same time period 3 municipalities are selected in stratum "South" (clusters: SM11, SM1 and SM5) and in each of them 2 ports are randomly selected and visited (SM11 03 and SM11 04; SM1 01 and SM1 03; SM5 04 and SM5 05).**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LocationId | LOrecordType | LOstratification | LOclustering | LOstratumName | LOclusterName | LOnumberTotal | LOnumberSampled | LOselectionMethod | LOinclusionProb | LOnumberTotalClusters | LOnumberSampledClusters | LOselectionMethodCluster | LOinclusionProbCluster | LOunitName |
| 1 | LO | Y | S2C | North | NM2 | 7 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,4286 | 8 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | NM2 01 |
| 2 | LO | Y | S2C | North | NM2 | 7 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,4286 | 8 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | NM2 06 |
| 3 | LO | Y | S2C | North | NM2 | 7 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,4286 | 8 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | NM2 03 |
| 4 | LO | Y | S2C | North | NM6 | 6 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,5 | 8 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | NM6 02 |
| 5 | LO | Y | S2C | North | NM6 | 6 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,5 | 8 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | NM6 06 |
| 6 | LO | Y | S2C | North | NM6 | 6 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,5 | 8 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | NM6 03 |
| 7 | LO | Y | S2C | South | SM11 | 4 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,5 | 12 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | SM11 03 |
| 8 | LO | Y | S2C | South | SM11 | 4 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,5 | 12 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | SM11 04 |
| 9 | LO | Y | S2C | South | SM1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,6667 | 12 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | SM1 01 |
| 10 | LO | Y | S2C | South | SM1 | 3 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,6667 | 12 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | SM1 03 |
| 11 | LO | Y | S2C | South | SM5 | 5 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,4 | 12 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | SM5 04 |
| 12 | LO | Y | S2C | South | SM5 | 5 | 2 | SRSWOR | 0,4 | 12 | 3 | SRSWOR | 0,25 | SM5 05 |

1. hereby termed commercial species for sake of simplicity [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. “**At-sea sampling with trips as primary sampling units**. When trips can be selected randomly from a fleet of vessels, at least approximately, it is often reasonable to treat vessel-trips as the primary sampling units. In such cases, the list of all trips (obtained at the end of the year) makes up the sampling frame. This is a virtual frame that cannot be used in stage 1 to select the trips. The actual selection is typically based on a frame with a vessel list crossed with time. For a fleet with day-trips this can easily be achieved by randomizing the selection of days and vessels. For fleets with varying trip-length it is more difficult to selected vessels and trips with approximately equal inclusion probabilities. It can be helpful to create strata where vessels with a similar trip length are grouped“, (WKPICS, 2013 p. 41) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. ICES. 2020. Workshop on Estimation with the RDBES data model (WKRDB-EST; outputs from 2019 meeting). ICES Scientific Reports. 2:5. 106 pp. http://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.5954 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. ICES. 2020. Workshop on Estimation with the RDBES data model (WKRDB-EST; outputs from 2019 meeting). ICES Scientific Reports. 2:5. 106 pp. http://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.5954 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)