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VAN

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### **Rapportage ICES Working Group on Innovative Fishing Gear 2025 (BO-43-225-016)**

WGING held its inaugural meeting in Copenhagen, 15-17 October 2025. WGING was set up to prepare the European Commission's three-annual special advice request on innovative fishing gears, which is laid down in the Technical Measures Regulation (TMR). WGING is a structural follow-up of two previous workshops: WKING1 (2020) and WKING2 (2023).

Innovative gear is defined by ICES as gear that deviates from the regulatory baseline within an EU sea basin and achieves equal or improved performance in selectivity or ecosystem impact. Member States (MS) may submit joint recommendations (JRs) for such innovations.

WGING's Terms of Reference (ToRs) include: (a) improving the online gear catalogue, (b) refining data collection for so-called PESTEL analysis to identify factors that challenge or encourage uptake of innovative gear by fishers, (c) developing a data call template for innovative fishing gear, and (d) reviewing experiences with voluntary uptake.

#### **ToR A – Gear Catalogue**

The online catalogue now includes 75 factsheets detailing gear type, area, Technology Readiness Level (TRL), ecological and economic performance, and PESTEL information. The template is being refined to standardize data through tick-box inputs and facilitate broader data collection beyond DGMARE's core requirements. WGING will continue working with the ICES data team to develop the factsheet template and an online database that populates the factsheet. The next in-person session will test the revised layout and collect user feedback. Volunteers to work on this intersessionally have been identified. Special attention will be given to the quality of the data through i) provision of reliable sources of information (through doi or unpublished documents to be added to the ICES library) and ii) the implementation of a review system.

#### **ToR B – PESTEL Data Collection**

WKING2 developed a framework to assess uptake influenced by Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal factors. A systematic data collection method for the PESTEL analysis needs to be developed. WGING agreed to focus data collection on innovations with high TRL and promising gears (in terms of their ability to reach their sustainability goals and their expected economic performances), align

## **Memo**

Wageningen  
Marine  
Research

DATUM

December 16, 2025

ONDERWERP

Rapportage ICES Working  
Group on Innovative Fishing  
Gear 2025 (BO-43-225-016)

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data collection as much as possible with ongoing projects, and start with pilot case studies to test methods. A protocol was developed for group discussions with fishers to collect the required data. The protocol leans heavily on work carried out by joint work carried out by WMR and WSER for the BO-project *Beloonsystemen visserij* (BO-43-119.02-004, <https://doi.org/10.18174/652049>).

Nathalie Steins will be involved in the intersessional discussions on qualitative data on case study gears prior to next meeting

#### **ToR C – Data Availability**

At the next meeting, participants will review national data collection information and discuss which questions should guide a future data call or advice on the need for additional data collection.

#### **ToR D - Reviewing experiences with voluntary uptake**

Not planned for this year.

#### **Personal observations**

WGING includes a mixed group of experts from different disciplines, including gear technology, biology, sociology and economics, and a range of different countries from ICES member countries and beyond (one of the chair is from Italy, not a member country of ICES and WG members from Australia and New Zealand contributed actively to this WG and previous WGs). This mixture of experts is needed to further our understanding of the reasons for (lack of) innovative gear uptake. We noticed that the presence and insights of social scientists were much appreciated by the gear technologists, many of whom – unlike in the Netherlands – are less used to working in interdisciplinary teams. Missing from the group were experts from the fishing industry, even when the chairs had actively tried to recruit them for the meeting. We will bring the next meeting explicitly under the attention of the industry organisations.

Our experiences in the aforementioned BO-project on *Beloonsystemen visserij* and long-standing research collaboration with the industry benefitted the discussions and the work on preparing systematic data collection methods.

The next meeting will be held in June 2026 in order to deliver input to DGMARE on time for their reporting, every three years.