

Delegates are invited to adopt the extension of the ICES data policy of 1994 as presented below. The reason for this proposed specification is that the DATRAS project will make data available on the ICES website and therefore detailed rule for which data are in the public domain and which are not is required.

The proposal follows the results of the discussion in WGIBTS and conforms to the administrative practise that has been followed by the Secretariat.

Proposal for ICES on Access to Bottom Trawl Survey Data

Introduction

Over the last decades it has become apparent that much of the scientific and advisory work relies heavily on the availability and easy access to high-quality data sources. Although there is a feeling among individual scientists that access to these data should be as unrestricted as possible, it is understood that these data were collected at considerable cost and therefore represent a substantial value. As such it should be possible to protect them from being accessed by unauthorized parties.

ICES has a long tradition of maintaining databases of oceanographic, environmental or fisheries data at their Headquarters and providing potential users with extractions from those databases. Access to these data was regulated by rules and procedures as stated in “Status, and rules and procedures governing oceanographic, environmental and fisheries data bases maintained at the ICES secretariat” (C.M. 1994/Del:10). The development of an extensive database of trawl survey data at ICES Headquarters that can be accessed through the web necessitates a further formalization of these rules and procedures. The aim of this revision is to enhance transparency and ensure easy access to the data by authorized parties while restricting access by other parties.

Database Trawl Surveys (DATRAS)

As part of the assessment of the status of the fish stocks in the North Sea, Baltic Sea and western European waters (i.e. Celtic Sea, Bay of Biscay and Eastern Atlantic from Shetlands to Gibraltar), fisheries institutes of the bordering countries have for many years carried out research vessel surveys. As part of the EU funded project DATRAS (Database Trawl Surveys) the data from these surveys will be combined into one central database at ICES HQ. Therefore this database will hold data from the following survey/area combinations:

- IBTS North Sea, Skagerrak, Kattegat:
- IBTS western and southern divisions
- BTS North Sea, Channel and Irish Sea.
- BITS Baltic Sea

ICES Policy on Access to Bottom Trawl Survey Data

For the ICES policy on access to the trawl database four user categories are distinguished and three different types of data.

User categories:

1. Public
2. ICES working groups.
3. Institutes that have supplied data to the database.
4. Individuals that request data, typically for research purposes.

Data types:

1. Standard maps and graphs: Per survey/area combination for all relevant ages of species for which assessments are conducted. Maps will show bubble plots indicating abundance per ICES rectangle or per haul. Time series of the indices and a graph showing the proportion of the age-groups will be generated.
2. Aggregated data. A query of the database using pivot tables. Based on these tables, plots and graphs can be made on an interactive basis. The minimum level of aggregation differs between survey/area combinations.
 - ICES rectangle: IBTS in the North Sea, Skagerrak, Kattegat and the BTS in the North Sea, Channel and Irish Sea
 - Stratum: IBTS western and southern divisions
 - Sub-division and stratum: BITS Baltic Sea
3. Un-aggregated (raw) data. These are catch (numbers at length and/or numbers at age) data on a haul-by-haul basis and SMALK (Sex, Maturity, Age-Length-Keys) data per individual.

Data access per “User category” and per “Data type” should be organized according to the following matrix. F is the abbreviation for “free access”, P for “password protected access” and R for “access after granted request”.

Data type	User categories			
	Public	ICES WG ¹	Data supplier ²	Individuals
Standard maps and graphs	F	F	F	F
Aggregated data		P	P	P/R ³
Non-aggregated (raw) data		P	P	R ⁴

Notes:

- ¹ ICES WGs will have access to data from only those survey/area combinations that are relevant for their recommendations and as such should be specified in those recommendations.
- ² Data suppliers will only have access to data of those survey/area combinations to which the institute has provided data.
- ³ Per survey/area combination the members can decide whether individuals will have free access to aggregated data or only after request. In case of a request, access can be requested and allowed per survey/area combination
- ⁴ Access can be requested and allowed per survey/area combination

The maps and graphs can be downloaded from the ICES website. All data (aggregated or non-aggregated) are protected by passwords. Different passwords will be applied for each survey/area combination. For ICES WGs the required passwords for those survey/area combinations that may be accessed will be issued to the chair of the WG. These passwords will only be valid for the duration of the WG. Institutes that have supplied data to the database will receive a password for access to that survey/ area combination to which they supplied the data. For access to other survey/ area combinations the same rules apply as for individuals.

Request for access to the database must be made through the ICES website. A standard form must be filled in to inform the institutes involved in the survey(s) on

- Who is requesting data, including partners in the research project

- The purpose of the data request
- Which data are requested
- Confirmation that the ICES rules for acknowledging the data source will be observed

Completing the form will automatically send a request to the relevant survey contact person of each institute involved with that survey/ area combination and this person will be requested to reply to ICES within 14 days. If a contact person does not reply within this time limit, it will be taken as acceptance of the request for data access. When after 14 days no relevant data supplier has objected, ICES will provide a password to the requesting scientist. Using this password the data requester will be able to download the requested data. This password will only be valid for 7 days.