

23rd Meeting of the Codex Contact Points in the Arab Region

**ANALYSIS OF AGENDA ITEMS IN PREPARATION FOR THE 17th SESSION OF THE
CODEX COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOOD
(CCCF17)**

April 4, 2024

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Agenda Item 6:

SAMPLING PLANS FOR METHYLMERCURY

IN FISH (At Step 4)

CX/CF 24/17/6



Background : Agenda Item 6.1

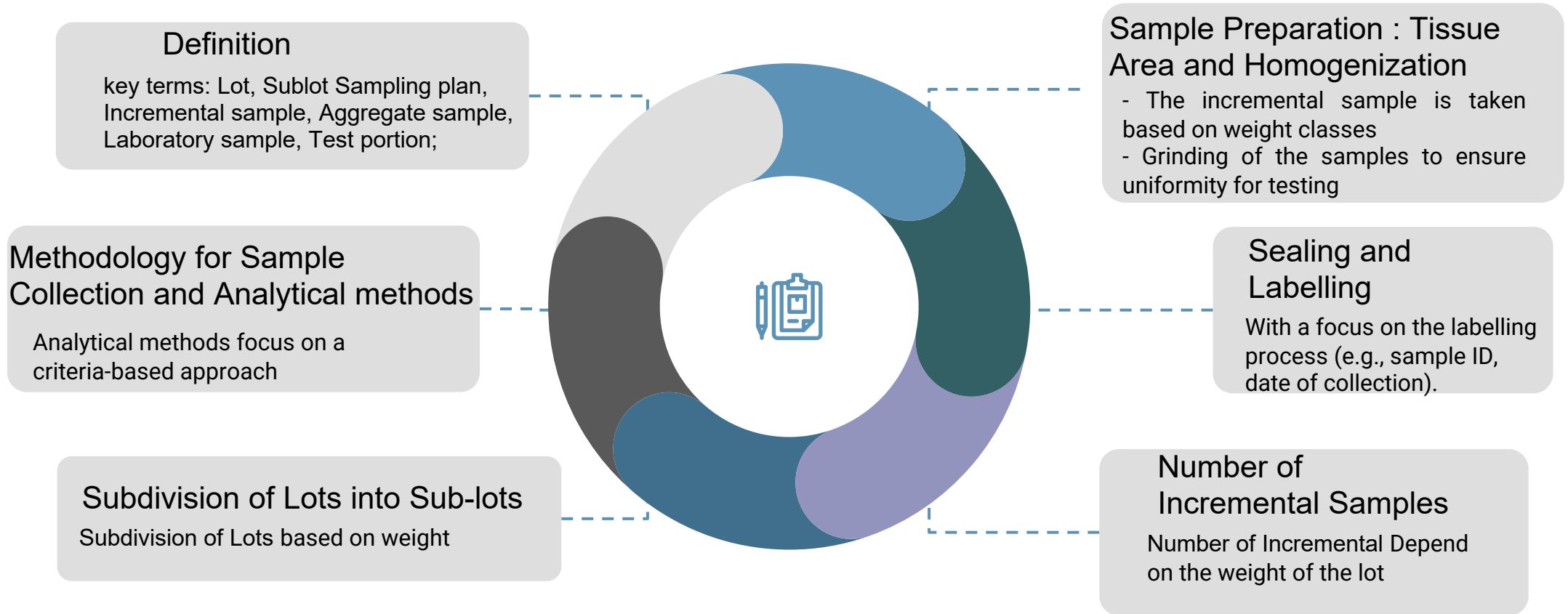
Agenda Item 6.1



SAMPLING PLANS FOR METHYLMERCURY IN FISH (At Step 4)

CCCF11 (2017)	In terms of progressing maximum levels (MLs) for methylmercury in fish, the committee identified that they should be accompanied by sampling plans.
CCCF12 (2018)	The draft sampling plan was discussed accompanying the proposed MLs for various fish species. The Committee agreed to send the draft to the (CCMAS) for endorsement and to request advice.
CCCF13 (2019)	A revised sampling plan for approval was postponed due to inconsistencies with other sampling plans in the General Standard for Contaminants in Foods (CXS 193-1995)
CCCF14 (2018) CCCF15 (2022)	It was agreed to proceed with the sampling plan's development.

Sampling Plan Proposal for Methylmercury Contamination in Fish

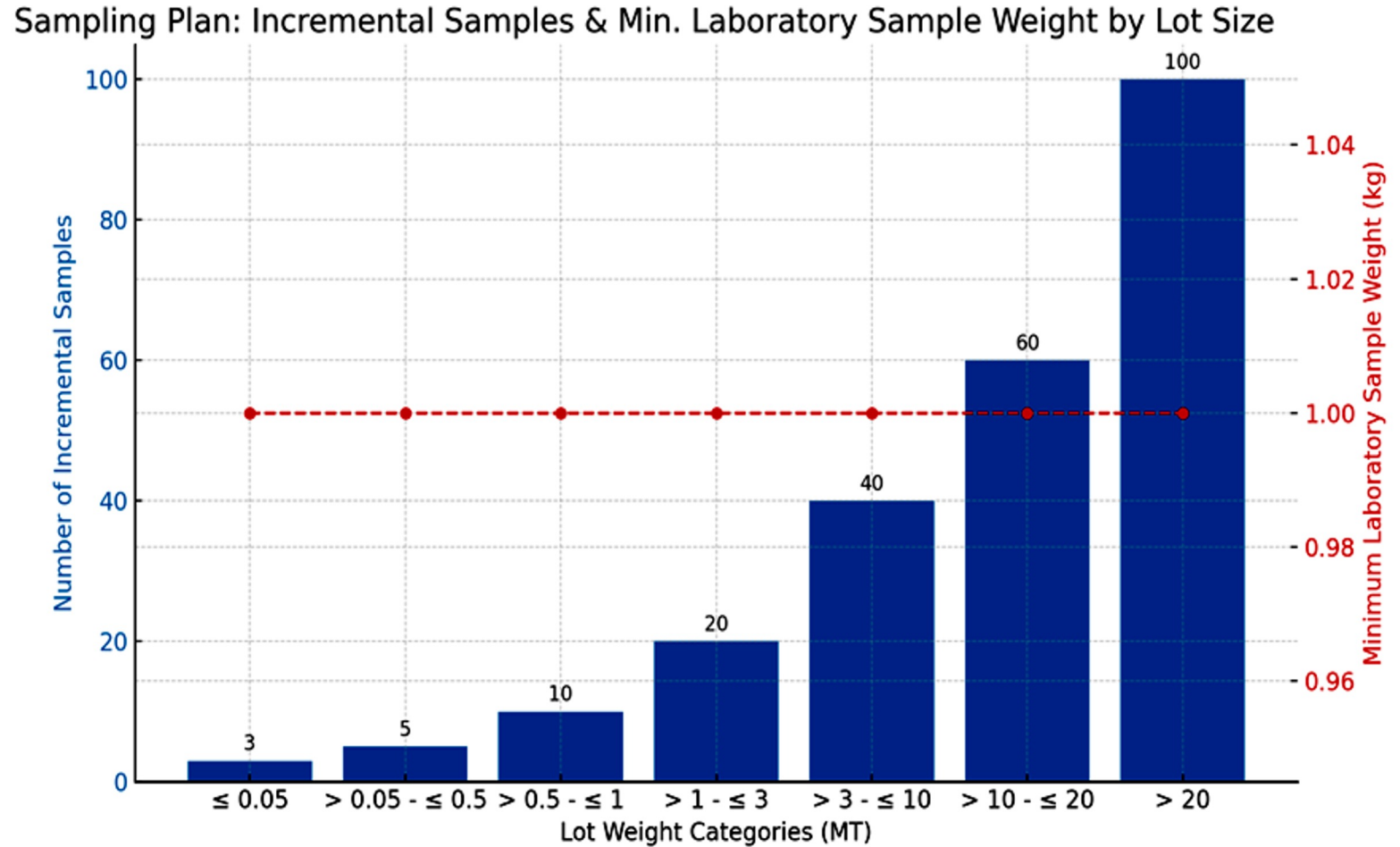


Species of interest :Tuna, Shark, Alfonsino, And Marlin, Orange Roughy And Pink Cusk-eel.

Lot Weight-Determined Incremental Sampling Number

Number of Incremental Samples

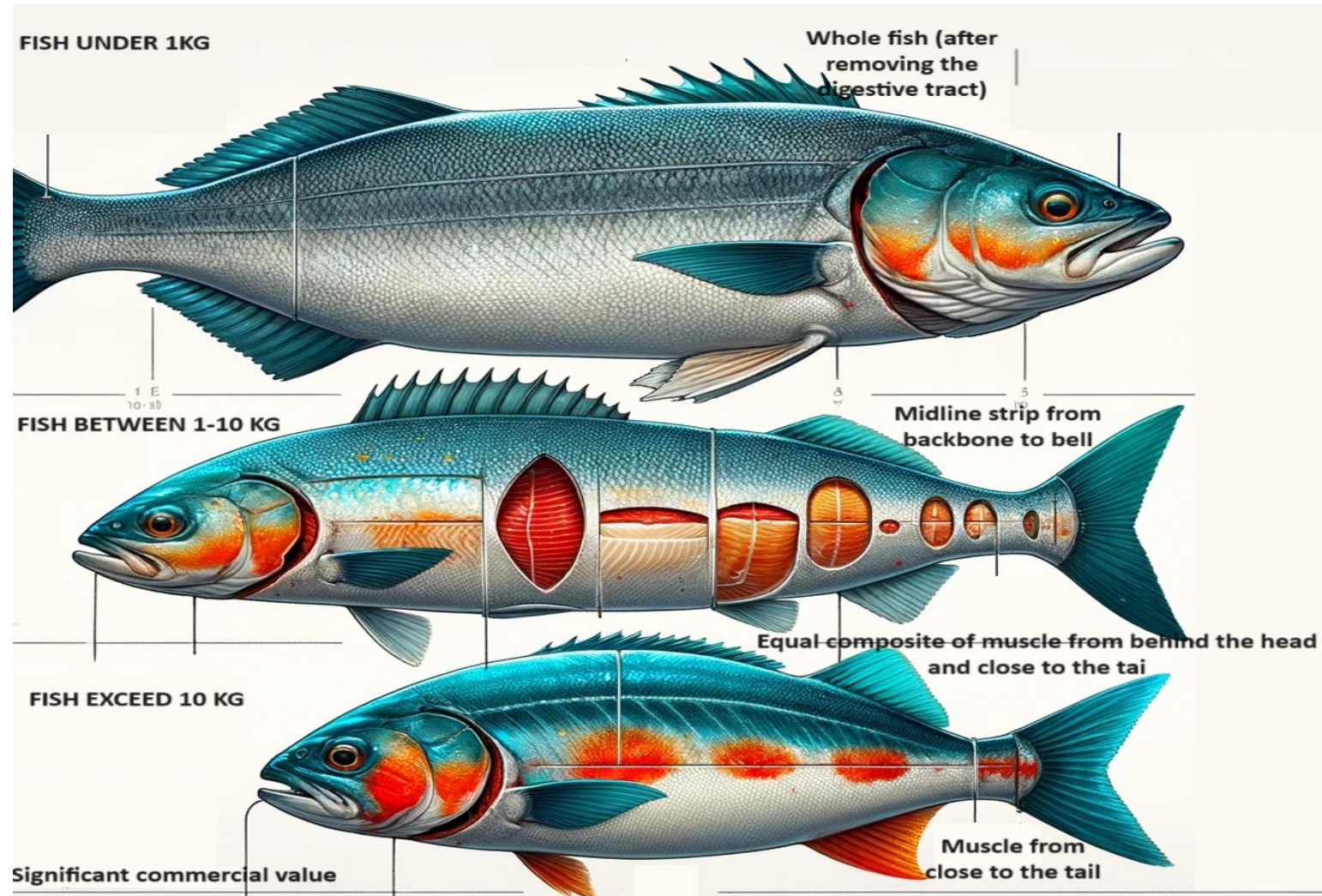
Number of Incremental Depend on the weight of the lot.



Weight-Class Based Incremental Sampling Methodology

Sample Preparation : Tissue Area and Homogenization

- Tissue Area : The incremental sample is taken based on weight classes
- Homogenization
Grinding of the samples to ensure uniformity for testing

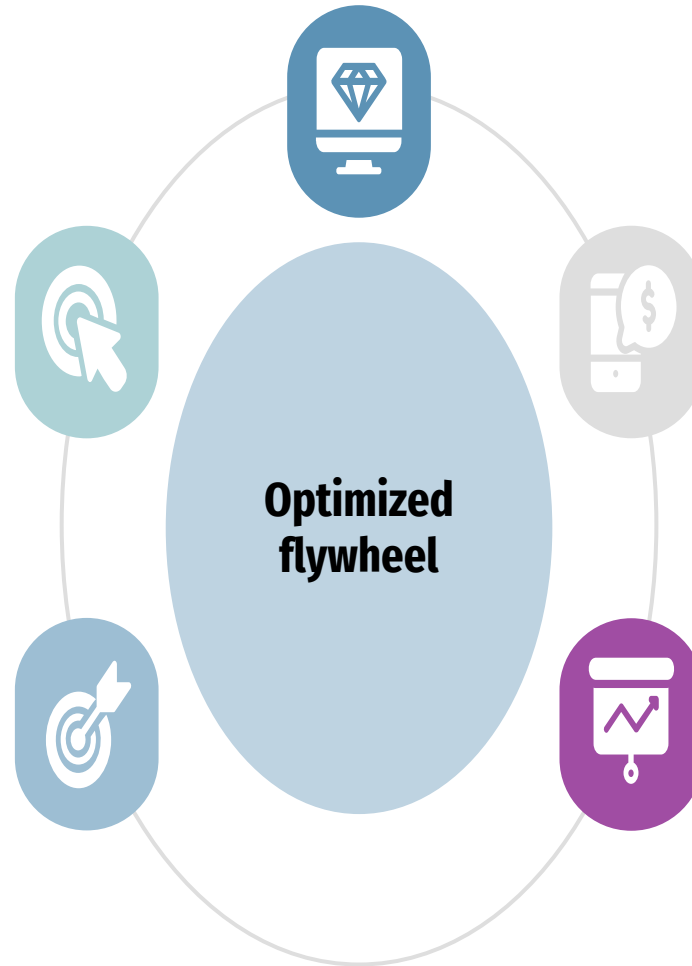


Comments

Seven member countries or organizations—Canada, Egypt, the European Union, Japan, Peru, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand—responded to Circular Letter 2022/47-CF

Four members—Brazil, Canada, Japan, and the United States—offered feedback on the proposed sampling plan, with all considering it acceptable.

One member shared detailed seafood handling guidelines that included a size grading schedule for major species.



EWG members were asked to provide data to ascertain appropriate size classes for fish, suggesting an effort to standardize or analyze fish sizes.

Information was only available for certain tuna species, indicating a gap in the data for other species.

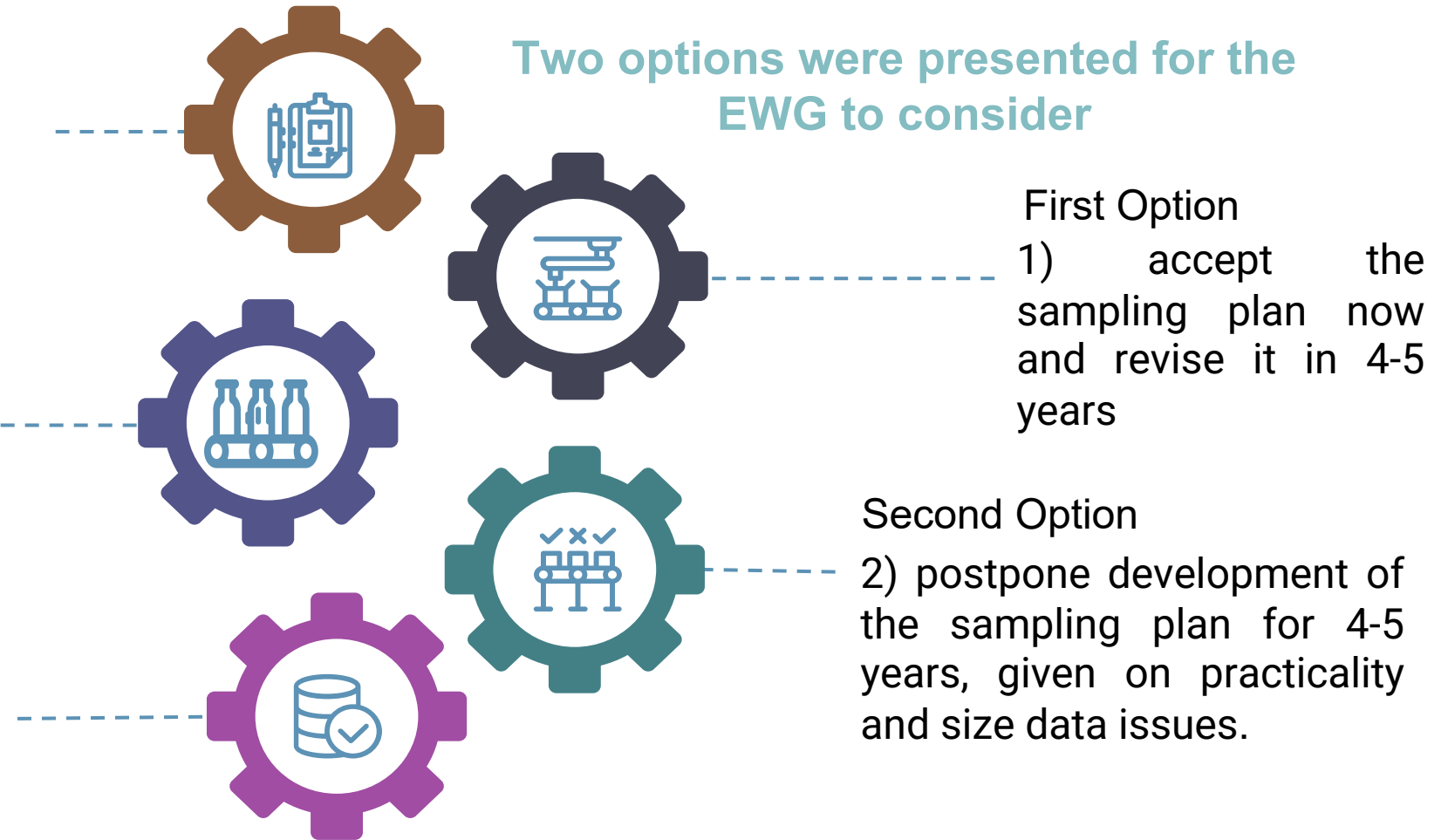
There was no information provided about the typical size ranges of commercially harvested fish for which Codex Maximum Limits (MLs) exist, highlighting a deficiency in the available data.

Overall Considerations

Creating a single sampling plan for all four fish species/groups is challenging

Significant size differences within and between fish species/groups with established MLs

There is a lack of data on mercury distribution across different body parts of the species of interest.



Conclusion and Recommendations



❖ Arab Codex delegations could suggest adding a new category for fish weighing 1 to 10 kg to improve the accuracy of mercury measurement in the sampling plan.

❖ Arab delegations may support the adoption at step 5 to allow time to address any remaining gaps.

❖ Arab Codex delegations may collaborate in sharing data on methylmercury in regional fish, focusing on Tuna and Shark, while noting that Alfonsino, Marlin, Orange Roughy, and Pink Cusk-eel are less relevant for the Arab fisheries.

