

Rules of Procedure for the North Atlantic Regional Coordination Group

1. Scope

- 1.1. These Rules of Procedure are valid for the Regional Coordination Group (RCG) for the North Atlantic in the framework of the Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, a management and use of data in fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the Common Fisheries Policy and repealing Council regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (recast).
- 1.2. These Rules of Procedure are established based on the Article 9(5) of the above mentioned Regulation. These Rules of Procedure are established XXth September 2017 by the Member States of the Regional Coordination Group coordinating their data collection activities in the North Atlantic for 2018/2019: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

2. Working language

- 2.1. The working language of the RCG is English.

3. Terms of Reference for the RCG

- 3.1. The RCG may agree the Terms of Reference for the RCG taking into account necessary contributions and information.

4. Meetings of the RCG

- 4.1. To perform its duties, the RCG shall hold one meeting annually unless agreed otherwise by the RCG. An annual meeting shall consist of plenary sessions and may include work in subgroups.
- 4.2. The RCG may hold additional meetings to the annual meeting. The duration, form, meeting venue, terms of reference and other relevant elements for such an additional meeting may be agreed at the RCG annual meeting, the Liaison meeting or by correspondence initiated by the RCG Chairperson(s). The venue of the RCG annual meeting will rotate between Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the same marine region unless otherwise agreed by the RCG.
- 4.3. No later than two months before the annual or additional meeting, the Member State organizing the annual or additional meeting shall be responsible for providing details of accommodation, travel and other organizational information relevant for the meeting.

- 4.4. In accordance with Article 7.2(c) of reg 2017/1004, the National Correspondent for each Member State coordinating the data collection activities in the same marine region and the European Commission shall coordinate the participation in a RCG meeting and shall inform the RCG chairs who will then inform the hosting country within an agreed deadline.
- 4.5. The European Commission shall participate at all Annual Meetings and may attend any other meetings.
- 4.6. Member States not listed in point 1.2., that are interested in coordinating their data collection activities in the North Atlantic may nominate a national correspondent or an expert to participate at an RCG meeting.

5. The chairperson(s) responsibilities

- 5.1. The chairperson(s) of the RCG shall promote effective and productive work and working methods of the RCG. The chairperson(s), an institution or a person indicated by the chairperson shall be responsible for making the documents and information available in time and shall take all necessary action to that effect.
- 5.2. The chairperson(s) is responsible for preparing agendas for the RCG meetings.
- 5.3. The RCG chairperson(s) shall be responsible for uploading to a shared platform and disseminating all documents and other information related to the meeting. The RCG is currently assisted in this task by ICES.

6. Agenda and submission of documents

- 6.1. A draft agenda for the annual RCG meeting shall be made available no later than one month in advance of the meeting. A draft agenda shall be approved at the beginning of the meeting. The approved agenda may be supplemented during the meeting.

This draft agenda will indicate the day(s) of the meeting when the decisions are to be made.

- 6.2. Other documents than the draft regional work plans for the RCG meetings shall be made available no later than two weeks in advance to the RCG meetings. Documents made available later than two weeks in advance to the RCG meetings, may be dealt at the meeting in case of consent of all the national correspondents present at the RCG NA annual meeting.

7. RCG subgroups

- 7.1. To carry out its duties as set out in the Article 9 of the Regulation 2017/1004, the RCG may agree to establish permanent or temporary bodies, task groups, subgroups or other arrangements (hereafter called *subgroups*). The RCG will appoint the lead(s) and any other role(s) or working practices necessary and provide terms of references. The RCG may give this mandate to the subgroup(s).
- 7.2. These subgroups will carry out their duties during and between the RCG meetings, as appropriate and as agreed by the RCG. The subgroup lead or a person nominated by the lead shall keep the RCG informed of the progress of such work and any issues arising at intervals agreed at the RCG.

8. Draft regional work plans and RCG endorsement

- 8.1. Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the region will endeavour to agree on a draft regional work plan under Article 9 of Regulation 2017/1004, by consensus at the RCG annual meeting.
- 8.2. All relevant Member States shall ensure the participation of appropriate expert(s) in preparing draft regional work plans. The European Commission may participate at all stages.
- 8.3. Member States shall take all necessary steps to ensure that they are represented by a person mandated to take a decision on the draft regional work plan.
When the RCGNA endorses the draft regional plan by consensus, it will be submitted to the Commission for approval.
- 8.4. A draft regional work plan, where a decision is expected to be made in accordance with the draft agenda of the RCG annual meeting, shall be circulated to the national correspondents two months in advance of the meeting.
- 8.5. A decision on a draft regional work plan may, if necessary, be made by written procedure. The chairperson of the RCG will coordinate the written procedure through National Correspondents. The procedure should be completed within an agreed timeframe.
- 8.6. In the event that a member states participant at the meeting does not have sufficient mandate to approve unscheduled changes to a regional work plan made at the meeting then the written procedure referred to in section 8.5 will be used.

8.7. The chairperson of the RCG shall notify the RCG of the decision within two weeks after the written procedure has ended.

9. Procedure for recommendations

9.1. The RCG may give non-binding recommendations only. The aim of the recommendation is to orientate further work to be carried out on all issues related to the scope of the Regulation 2017/1004.

9.2. If to progress, the RCG requires input by external bodies outside the participation at the RCG, the RCG shall use a process of recommendations to other RCGs, institutes, RFMOS, MS, end-users and/or other external bodies and shall agree a list of recommendations at the annual meeting to be forwarded to the Liaison Meeting.

9.3. The recommendations should provide, but are not limited to, clear and understandable stand-alone guidance on the recommended work to be carried out, its justification, a foreseen time frame for fulfilment and to the extent possible, person(s) or institution(s) responsible for the follow up of such recommendation.

10. Cooperation between RCGs and the European Commission and other relevant bodies

10.1. RCGs and subgroup chairs shall endeavour to cross reference the ToRs of other RCGs and their subgroups and/or other relevant Expert Groups.

10.2. The chairperson of the RCG and/or other person(s) mandated by the RCG may participate and represent the RCG in any coordination with other RCGs and the commission under Article 9(6) of Regulation 2017/1004 and will keep the RCG informed within an agreed time frame.

10.3. The chairperson of the RCG and/or other person(s) mandated by the RCG annual meeting may participate and represent RCG in other relevant regional bodies, arrangements or meetings and will keep the RCG informed within an agreed time frame.

11. Observers

11.1. In accordance with the Article 9(7) of the Regulation 2017/1004, RCG shall invite as observers relevant end users of scientific data, including appropriate scientific bodies as referred to in Article 26 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, regional fisheries management organizations, Advisory Councils and third countries, when necessary.

- 11.2. If an independent organisation or individual seeks to attend an RCG meeting as an observer, they must make a formal request to the RCG Chairperson(s) in two months in advance with justification. The RCG Chairperson(s) will consult members for a final decision.
- 11.3. The RCG shall decide by consensus and no later than four weeks prior to the annual meeting which observers shall be invited to attend RCG and subgroup meetings.
- 11.4. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (*ICES*) has a standing invitation to participate in all annual RCGNA meetings and may be invited to participate in RCG subgroup work.
- 11.5. After a written confirmation from the RCG chairperson(s), observers may attend the meeting. The attendance may be subject to conditions, for example – exclusion from particular discussions and presentations.
- 11.6. Observers are bound by the conditions set by the RCG. If one or more of these conditions are violated repeatedly or seriously by the observer their continued attendance may be re-evaluated. The observer/organisation shall be informed of this, including the results of the re-evaluation, by a letter from the RCG chairperson(s) after consulting and with the consent of the RCG National Correspondents.
- 11.7. Observers may be invited to provide written contributions or presentations.

12. Election of the RCG chairperson(s)

- 12.1. One term for a chairperson covers the period of two years. A chairperson may serve no more than two consecutive terms. The role will rotate between Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the same marine region unless otherwise agreed by the RCG.
- 12.2. The Chairperson may be agreed by the MS present at the RCG annual meeting or elected by a simple majority.
- 12.3. RCG may decide to have co-chairperson(s). The same procedures and conditions as to the chairperson(s) elections apply.

13. Reporting from a RCG meeting

- 13.1. The chairperson(s) of the RCG or a person appointed by the chairperson(s) shall be responsible for drawing up a report from a RCG meeting. The draft report shall contain, but is not limited to, recommendations from the RCG, the decisions taken, a summary of the RCG intersessional progress and RCG discussions, future work directions, the intended work to be carried out before the next meeting, the list of foreseeable RCG meetings and list of participants, their contact information, role and institution.

- 13.2. The draft report shall be uploaded to the shared platform for dissemination to all participants within two months of the RCG annual meeting. The final report will be published on the JRC website as appropriate.

14. Amending rules of procedure

- 14.1. These Rules of procedure may be reviewed and amended at the RCG annual meeting by consensus of all member states present and endorsed by all National Correspondents of the RCG, or in a written procedure by all National Correspondents replying within one month after the RCG meeting in which the amendment had been agreed.