

Rules of Procedure for the Large Pelagic Regional Coordination Group

1. Scope

1.1. These Rules of Procedure are valid for the Regional Coordination Group (RCG) for Large Pelagic stocks in all regions 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.

1.3. These Rules of Procedure are established 14th May 2019 by the following Member States of the Regional Coordination Group coordinating their data collection activities in Large Pelagics fisheries: Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

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 or by correspondence initiated by the RCG Chairperson(s). The venue of the RCG annual meeting will rotate between Member States coordinating their LP data collection activities unless otherwise agreed by the RCG.

4.3. No later than one month 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 Each Member State coordinating the data collection activities in the scope of the RCG LP appoints the participants to RCG meetings, and may choose the number of participants with due regard of the items on the agenda and decision to be taken by the RCG in the relevant meeting. The information of the nominations should be communicated to the chairperson(s) of the RCG.

4.5. Member States not listed in point 1.3., may nominate a national correspondent or an expert to participate in a RCG meeting.

4.6. Only nominated persons may participate in the RCG meetings.

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 later than one month in advance of the meeting 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 disseminating all documents and other information related to the meeting.

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 draft agenda will indicate on which day(s) during the meeting the discussion or decision on the draft regional plan is to be taken.

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

7.3 When a subgroup is mandated to prepare a draft regional work plan in the sense of Article 9 of Regulation 2017/1004, relevant Member States shall send expert(s) with the necessary expertise related to that draft regional work plan to participate in the group's work. National correspondents and European Commission may participate in the group's work at all stages.

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 RCG LP endorses, by consensus, the draft Regional Sampling Plan, 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 one month in advance of the meeting. A draft regional work plan for a

decision in the RCG annual meeting made available later than one-month before the RCG annual meeting, may be considered and decided upon at that meeting in case of consent of all the national correspondents.

8.5. A decision on a draft regional work plan may, if necessary, for example when there is no consensus at the meeting, 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 The chairperson of the RCG shall notify the RCG of the decision within two weeks after the written procedure has ended.

9. RCG 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. The recommendations should provide, but are not limited to, clear and understandable stand-alone guidance, guidelines or best practices on the recommended work to be carried out, its justification and objectives, 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

9.1 RCGs and subgroup chairs shall endeavour to cross reference the ToRs of other relevant groups and subgroups from other Regions and Expert Groups.

9.2. 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.

9.3. 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) one month in advance, with justification. The RCG Chairperson(s) will consult members for a final decision. This formal request should contain at least, the following information to the chairperson(s) of the RCG at least one month in advance of the RCG meeting:

- The relevance of their participation from the Common Fisheries Policy and/or fisheries management point of view and
- Their data interest as accurately as possible relevant to that RCG and
- The scientific bodies/groups in their relevant institution or country conducting the scientific analyses based on the relevant data and
- The management body with a legal mandate for fisheries management within the CFP for which the scientific analysis based on the RCG data is conducted for and
- How, to whom and where the results of the scientific analysis referred above are intended to be made available and
- Organizational details and details of the representative to be nominated to participate
- Commitment to comply with the rules and conditions set by the RCG and any other information considered relevant by the potential observer.

11.3. The RCG shall decide by consensus prior to the annual meeting, at least two weeks prior, which observers shall be invited to attend RCG and subgroup meetings. Tuna RFMOs have a standing invitation to participate in all annual RCG LP meetings and may be invited to participate in RCG subgroup work.

11.4. 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.

11.5. Observers are bound with the conditions referred above. If there are justified reasons to consider, that one or more of the conditions set by the RCG in the written confirmation or otherwise, are violated repeatedly or seriously by the observer, the necessity of the observer to attend or the conditions for the attendance may be re-evaluated. The observer/organization shall be informed of this, including the results of the re-evaluation, by a letter from the RCG chairperson(s) after consulting and in consent with the national correspondents of the RCG responding to the chairperson's consultation.

11.6. 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. 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(s) appointed by the chairperson(s) shall be responsible for drawing up a report from a RCG meeting. The 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 or additional meeting by consensus of all national correspondents or in a written procedure by all national correspondents replying within a set time limit of at least 1 month.

14.2. Any Member State of the RCG can request the review and amendment of the Rules of Procedure to be put on the agenda of the RCG meeting.

14.3. The list of Member States in point 1.3 may be amended in accordance with the paragraph 13.1. after a written request has been provided to the RCG chairperson(s) by a Member State not listed in the point 1.3.