



**Regional Coordination Group**  
Baltic



**Regional Coordination Group**  
North Atlantic  
North Sea & Eastern Arctic

## **Rules of Procedure**

### for the Regional Coordination Groups:

- **Baltic Sea**
- **North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic**

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## Rules of Procedure – RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic

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## Rules of Procedure – RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic

### 1. Scope

1.1. These Rules of Procedure apply to the following Regional Coordination Groups (RCG): the Baltic Sea and the North Atlantic, the North Sea and East Arctic established under the EU Data Collection Framework.

1.2. These Rules of Procedure were established on the 20th of September 2021<sup>1</sup> by the following EU Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the Baltic Sea, North Atlantic, North Sea and Eastern Arctic: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

### 2. Working language

2.1. The working language of the RCG is English.

### 3. Meetings of the RCG

3.1. To perform its duties, the RCG shall hold at least once a year an annual meeting (either physical or virtual) unless agreed otherwise by the RCG. An annual meeting shall consist of plenary sessions and may include work in subgroups.

3.2. 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 upon at the RCG annual meeting or in a written procedure initiated by the RCG Chairperson. The venue of the RCG annual meeting rotates between Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the same marine region. The order of the rotation is based on the alphabetical order in the English language of the Member States unless otherwise agreed by the RCG.

3.3. Based on a written invitation from a third country, the RCG may agree to hold its annual (or additional) meeting in a venue provided by the third country.

3.4. No later than one month before the annual or additional meeting, the Member State or a third country will be responsible for providing details of accommodation, travel, and other relevant organisational information.

3.5. Each Member State coordinating the data collection activities in the same marine region and the European Commission shall nominate their participants to a RCG meeting and may choose the number of their participants to a RCG meeting with due regard to the items on the agenda at the relevant RCG meeting. The information on the nominations should be communicated to the Chairperson (s) of the RCG.

3.6. Member States not listed in point 1.2., may nominate a national correspondent or an expert to participate in the RCG meeting.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Regional Coordination Group North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic & Regional Coordination Group Baltic RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC [REPORT Decision Meeting](#), 20th September 2021, Virtual Meeting: **D09**: NCs agreed on the combined Rules of Procedure for RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA.





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### 4. RCG subgroups

4.1. To carry out its duties, the RCG may agree to establish permanent or temporary bodies, task groups, subgroups, or other arrangements (hereafter called subgroups). The RCG will appoint the chair(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).

4.2. These subgroups carry out their duties during and between the RCG meetings, as appropriate and as agreed by the RCG. The subgroup chair or a person nominated by the chair shall keep the RCG informed of the progress of such work and any issues arising at intervals agreed at the RCG.

4.3. When a group is mandated to prepare a draft regional work plan in the sense of the DCF regulations, the relevant Member States and the European Commission shall send expert(s) with the necessary expertise related to that draft regional work plan to participate in the group's work.

### 5. RCG recommendations, preparations of a draft regional work plan

5.1. The RCG may give recommendations for further work to be carried out by the Member States on all issues related to the scope of the RCG activity. 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 and objectives, a foreseen time frame for fulfilment and to the extent possible, the person(s) or institution(s) responsible for the follow up of such recommendation.

5.2. When a subgroup has been mandated to prepare a draft regional work plan, the Chairperson of that subgroup or a person mandated by that subgroup shall keep the RCG and may keep scientific institutions referred to Article 26 in Regulation 1380/2013 informed of the progress of such work at intervals agreed by the RCG. Such procedures may include, e.g., requests or any other type of action, including timeframes for such action, to the national correspondents and/or scientific institutions referred to above relevant to the drafting of the draft work plan.

5.3. If the group mandated to prepare a draft regional work plan has not reached unanimity in preparing the draft regional work plan, Member States' experts or national correspondents participating in the subgroup's work, may indicate their difference of opinions with appropriate justification in the subgroup's report to the RCG meeting where the draft work plan is to be discussed and/or decided upon. Where appropriate, the subgroup's report may include European Commission and ICES concerns.

### 6. Decision-making on a draft regional work plan

6.1. Member States referred to in para 1.2. shall make a decision on a draft regional work plan by consensus. 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.

6.2. A national correspondent may give the mandate to agree on its own behalf on a draft regional work plan to another national correspondent from a different Member State present at the meeting where the decision on the draft regional work plan is to be taken. This shall be done by the national correspondent giving a written confirmation outlining the details of the mandate transferred. The confirmation needs to be done in advance of the RCG meeting, and it shall be provided to the Chairperson (s) of the RCG.

6.3. The Chairperson of the RCG may request, if necessary, observers at the annual meeting to be absent during the discussion intimately linked to the decision on a draft regional work plan.



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6.4. A decision on a draft regional work plan may be taken in exceptional situations by a written procedure. The Chairperson of the RCG may initiate such a written procedure after a mandate with the necessary details to organise and proceed with a written procedure has been given to the Chairperson at the RCG annual meeting.

6.5. The Chairperson of the RCG shall notify the RCG of the results of the written procedure within two weeks after the written procedure has ended.

6.6. The RCG shall make every effort to reach a consensus on a draft regional work plan. If, after serious and numerous attempts by the RCG, consensus cannot be reached and no decision on a draft regional work plan by the Member States can be taken, Member State(s) not in a position to support the draft regional work plan, shall provide a written justification to the RCG reasoning its divergent view within one month after the end of the RCG meeting where the divergent view was expressed.

6.7. Member States, who were in a position to support the draft regional work plan, may consider the content of the draft regional work plan in their national work plans as appropriate.

## 7. Cooperation between RCGs and other relevant bodies

7.1. The Chairperson (s) of the RCG and/or another person (s) mandated by the RCG may participate and represent the RCG in any coordination with other RCGs and with the European Commission under the provisions of the Data Collection Framework and shall keep the RCG informed within an agreed time frame.

7.2. The Chairperson (s) of the RCG and/or another person (s) mandated by the RCG may participate and represent the RCG in other relevant regional bodies, arrangements or meetings and shall keep the RCG informed within an agreed time frame.

## 8. Observers

8.1. In accordance with the provisions of the Data Collection Framework, RCG shall invite as observers relevant end users of scientific data, including appropriate scientific bodies, regional fisheries management organisations, Advisory Councils and third countries, where appropriate.

8.2. Observers referred to in the Data Collection Framework Regulation may indicate interest in participating in the RCG by sending the following information to the Chairperson of the RCG at least one month in advance of the RCG meeting.

The justification sent by the potential observer shall contain the following information:

- Indicate the relevance of their participation from the Common Fisheries Policy and/or fisheries management point of view and
- Indicate their data interest as accurately as possible relevant to that RCG and
- Indicate the scientific bodies/groups in their relevant institution or country conducting the scientific analyses based on the relevant data and
- Indicate 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 and
- Indicate how, to whom and where the results of the scientific analysis referred to above are intended to be made available and
- Organisational details and details of the representative to be nominated to participate
- The commitment to comply with the rules and conditions set by the RCG and any other information considered relevant by the potential observer.





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8.3. The RCG meeting shall consider the information provided and may request additional information.

8.4. The RCG shall decide by consensus of the Member States present at the meeting or prior to the meeting which observers shall be invited to the RCG meetings.

8.5. After written confirmation from the RCG chairperson, observers have the possibility to participate in the RCG meetings. The conditions set for the participants may include but are not limited to limitations on participation in RCG meetings or group work, limits on access to data or to be present when data is presented or available, and the possibility to provide written contributions or to give presentations.

8.6. Observers are bound by the conditions referred to 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 participate or the conditions for the participation 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 after consulting and in consent with the national correspondents of the RCG responding to the Chairperson's consultation.

8.7. Notwithstanding the provisions in points 8.2 - 8.6, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) has a standing invitation to participate in all RCG meetings.

## 9. Terms of Reference for the RCG

9.1. The RCG may agree on the Terms of Reference for the RCG taking into account necessary contributions and information deemed relevant by the RCG. This may include consultation with appropriate bodies or institutions prior to or during the decision-making to approve the Terms of Reference for the RCG.

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## 10. Agenda and submission of documents

10.1. A draft agenda for the annual or additional RCG meeting shall be made available no later than one month in advance of the meeting. The draft agenda shall indicate, where relevant, on which day(s) the discussion or decision on the draft regional plan is to be taken during the meeting. The draft agenda shall be approved at the beginning of the meeting.

10.2. A draft regional work plan, where a decision is expected to be taken in accordance with the draft agenda of the RCG meeting, shall be made available to the national correspondents one month before the meeting where the decision is made expected to be taken. A draft regional work plan for a decision in the RCG meeting made available later than one month before the RCG meeting may be considered and decided upon at that meeting in case of consent of all the national correspondents of the relevant marine region and implicated by the draft regional work plan.

10.3. When it is evident from the draft agenda of the RCG meeting that the draft regional work plan is not to be decided upon at that RCG meeting, the draft regional work plan can be made available to the national correspondents no later than one month in advance to the RCG meeting. Draft regional work plans made available later than one month in advance of the meeting may be decided upon at that meeting in case of consent of all the national correspondents of the relevant marine region and implicated by the draft regional work plan.

10.4. Other documents than the draft agenda and draft regional work plans for the RCG meetings shall be made available no later than two weeks in advance of the RCG meetings. Documents made available





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later than two 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.

### **I 1. Election of the RCG chairperson(s)**

11.1. The Chairperson may be elected or agreed upon without a vote by the RCG. A national correspondent or an expert from a Member State or European Commission may act as a chairperson of the RCG. National correspondents, European Commission, or participants of the RCG meeting nominated according to point 3.5 may suggest nominees for a chairperson. Unless agreed without a vote by the RCG, the election of a nominated chairperson(s) shall take place by voting in a form suggested by the resigning Chairperson after consulting the national correspondents and European Commission present at the RCG meeting. National correspondents present and European Commission representative present has the right to vote, and each has one vote. A simple majority decides the vote.

11.2. One term for a chairperson covers a period of two years. A chairperson may serve two consecutive terms without limiting the number of terms for the same person to act as a chairperson of the RCG.

11.3. RCG may decide to have a co-chairperson(s). The same procedures and conditions apply to the Chairperson (s) elections.

### **I 2. The chairperson(s) responsibilities**

12.1. The Chairperson (s) of the RCG shall facilitate the effective and productive work 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 take all necessary action to that effect.

12.2. The Chairperson (s) is responsible for preparing agendas for the RCG annual or additional meetings after consulting the national correspondents of that RCG and other institutions/bodies, as appropriate.

### **I 3. Reporting from a RCG meeting**

13.1. The Chairperson (s) of the RCG shall be responsible for drawing up a report from a RCG annual meeting. The final report should contain but is not limited to, decisions and recommendations of the RCG, a summary of the RCG intersessional progress and of the 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, status, and affiliation.

13.2. The final report from the annual meeting shall be made available to the participants of the meeting and publicly, as appropriate, within two months after the RCG annual meeting has ended. Reports from other meetings of the RCG shall be distributed within one month after the meeting has ended unless otherwise decided by the RCG.

### **I 4. Amending rules of procedure**

14.1. These Rules of Procedure may be 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 one month.





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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 paragraph 14.1. after a written request has been provided to the RCG chairperson(s) by a Member State not listed in point 1.3.

## 15. Repeal

15.1. The Rules of Procedure established on the 6th of September 2017 by the RCG for the Baltic Sea, and Rules of Procedure established in November 2017 by the RCGs for the North Atlantic and the North Sea and Eastern Arctic are repealed with effect from the date of adoption of these Rules of Procedure.

