

## MARE/2020/08 Annex 2:

### Actions in support of the work of RCGs

#### 0. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

##### Administrative needs of RCGs

The increased relevance of regional coordination of data collection, with the establishment of Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs), has led to an increased burden of coordination and administrative tasks associated with the operation of RCGs.

The annual meetings of RCGs and the Intersessional Subgroups (ISSG) require planning (e.g. establishing dates and timetables for meetings, ensuring timely production and distribution of documents, facilitating access to relevant information) and organisation (e.g. finding venues and accommodation, supporting travel arrangements of participants, organising side events). It includes clerical tasks (e.g. drafting of meeting agenda, written consultations following meetings and/or in preparation of meetings, drafting reports, preparing decisions and recommendations) carried out efficiently to ensure the functioning and added value of the established structures.

RCGs need a dedicated *website* to share information and communicate between different RCGs and with national administrations, and to increase the visibility of the RCGs' work to stakeholders. As the MARE/2016/22 grant fishPi2 project (first work package) concluded, a dedicated website would improve the impact of RCG work beyond actors already familiar with the DCF.

The different RCGs also exchange and coordinate decisions with each other and with the national correspondents. RCG chairs come together in an annual Liaison Meeting (organised by the Commission), and since 2019, join the DCF national correspondents in the RCG Decision Meeting. It is a crucial meeting for the achievement of RCGs work success, as it allows bringing together relevant issues from all RCGs, adopting specific measures and agreeing on implementing strategies for regional coordination in a long time perspective. This meeting links to the (following) National Correspondents meeting, where MS and the Commission discuss relevant points to fulfil the implementation of the DCF Regulation.

##### Challenges

In the current set up of RCGs, the elected RCG chairs are the ones who carry out these tasks (and are expected to address new tasks such as the creation of a website). However, chairs are data collection experts whose primary responsibility should be to bring forward the work on the RCG in terms of the *substance* of regional coordination. The demands of the administrative and coordination tasks on the chairs of the RCGs are limiting than in furthering the structures, design and content of the work of the regional coordination groups.

The outcomes of the MARE/2016/22 grant [fishPi2](#)<sup>1</sup> (first work package) highlight the increased responsibilities of chairs in recent years and suggest the need for a “secretariat” to support the communication among the RCGs and between RCGs and other stakeholders (relevant end-users of scientific data, RFMOs, Advisory Councils, Commission, third countries).

The shared funding for data collection in the EMFF<sup>2</sup> is based on national envelopes (per MS) and does not foresee EU-wide or regional funding mechanisms. MSs have so far not made funds available to support the administrative needs of regional coordination structures.

Developing mechanisms that will support RCGs (and in particular their chairs) on the planning and execution of necessary administrative tasks, clerical day-to-day work, including devising longer-term funding structures for such work, could, therefore, be a crucial contribution to the operation and functioning of the RCGs. Moreover, it will help RCGs advance beyond national approaches to achieve, transparently and impartially the expected results of coordinated regional work for data collection.

It should include exploring and establishing, in a hands-on approach, the clerical/planning/administrative work necessary to support the operation of RCGs (work package 1), developing and operating a pan-RCG website (work package 2), and developing and putting in place a continuity including in financial terms, for the work detailed under work packages 1 and 2 (work package 3).

## **1. WORK PACKAGE 1: DELIVERING ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO RCGS**

Under this work package, the applicant should identify and deliver administrative/clerical support to RCGs and their chairs during the period of this grant. This hands-on approach will allow building a clear understanding of which administrative support tasks of crucial for supporting the work of the RCGs and will enable establishing structures and workflows.

These administrative support tasks could include, as a non-exhaustive indicative list, the following elements:

1. Support the RCG chairs to prepare, set up and run the RCG meeting. In close collaboration with the RCG chairs and accordance with the rules of procedure, the following elements should be addressed:
  - Venue - support chairs to provide details of accommodation, travel and other organizational information relevant for the meeting.
  - Participants – support chairs with updated participant lists (including mailing lists), lists of NCs, make sure participants are formally nominated.
  - Observers – support chairs too, if needed, invite observers to the meeting.
  - Agenda – support chairs to set up an agenda and make sure it is sent to participants in due time.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see the North Atlantic & North Sea –fishPi2- project (final report and annexes) funded under MARE/2016/22 call, on the [DCF website](#).

<sup>2</sup> The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (art. 77 of the Regulation (EU) 508/2014) provides for data collection activities under the Union Priority 3.

- Documents - Keep track of documents for the RCGs and make them available for the participants in due time.
  - Provide certain rapporteur tasks during the meeting, in coordination with the chair.
2. Support the chairs to report from RCG meeting(s):
    - Support chairs in tracking and coordinating recommendations and agreements.
    - Finalizing draft report - support chairs to follow up on contributions to the report from participants.
    - Assure a standard format of the report and the use of the appropriate logos and visual identifiers.
    - Support chair to finalize the report in accordance with the rules of procedures.
    - Support the chairs to keep national correspondents informed of all decisions to be taken during the decision meeting.
  3. Support the chairs to organize and monitor intersessional subgroup work:
    - Organize and update lists, including contact information, on participants in the different intersessional sub-groups.
    - Keep track on sub group work, make sure that work plans for the sub-groups are produced, milestones reported and that results are delivered in time for the RCG meetings.
    - Support, if needed, sub-group chairs.

## **2. WORK PACKAGE 2: DEVELOPING AND OPERATING A WEBSITE**

Work package 2 concerns the development and operation of a pan-RCG website, which will serve both the internal needs (e.g. communication among RCGs and ISSG) and the needs for outreach, knowledge sharing and increased visibility of RCG work and outcomes to MS, stakeholders, etc. This website should be designed and set up in such a way as to ensure that RCG reports and information reach a larger audience than it is currently the case (reports are presently published at the JRC-DCF website only reaching a limited audience). The design, structure and content to be included on the website have to be agreed with the RCGs.

As part of the work, a decision has to be taken on whether and how to merge the SharePoint currently in use by all RCGs and the website into one single host. Currently, all RCGs use a SharePoint system, hosted by ICES. It is used for the RCGs' working material, preparation for meetings and intersessional sub-groups. The functions of this platform should continue, as it contains a historical series of material. Still duplicating content and processes should be avoided. It should also be explored whether the website already in place, hosted by the JRC, could be adjusted to serve the desired purposes.

As an indicative list, the [fishPi2](#) project discussed the target audience of the website and the type of information to include:

- The target audience may consist of people with prior interest and knowledge in fisheries, such as end-users, managers, NGOs, as well as RCG and DCF specialists.
- The website should serve and cover all RCGs. RCG chairs with the support of the administrative work under this grant should decide on the content to publish.
- The webpage should be user-friendly and updated on a regular basis to contain the latest relevant information.
- The following sections could be covered (indicative list):
  - Description of the RCGs: role and tasks in the data collection process, rules and procedures, participants and observers in meetings, procedures for observers, contact details to chairs and administrative support.
  - Work done by the RCGs: regional work plan, reports, stand-alone documents, sub-group reports, agreed work plan for sub-groups, recommendations and agreements, agreed guidelines, best practices and protocols, reference lists, etc.
  - Data products from the databases (developed by RCG sub-group): overviews of regional fisheries and sampling link to regional database pages and GitHub.
  - Gateway to other websites of relevance for implementing DCF (JRC websites on DCF and STECF, ICES, GFCM and other RFMOs, etc.).

Deliverable 1: A website should be established by the end of 2021 and operated until the end of the grant period.

### **3. WORK PACKAGE 3: ENSURING FUTURE OPERATION AND FUNDING**

Building on work package 1, where the necessary administrative/organisation/clerical tasks in support of RCGs were identified and explored in a hands-on approach, work package 3 should develop and put into operation a concept to ensure this type of support in the longer term, beyond the funding of this grant, which is limited in time and monetary amount.

It requires the development of funding structures and arrangements with the MS, and the solidification of the established structures as such, including website operation. Long-term robust funding and structure for regional tools and resources required for the effective RCG work must be agreed with the RCGs, the MS and the Commission. The developments of options for financing and set up of long term support should take into account the outcomes of the MARE/2016/22 grant [fishPi2](#) (outcomes from work package ), and 2019 reports from [RCG NANSEA](#) and [RCG Baltic](#) (point 5.5.1), which suggested different models for financing.

Deliverable 2: A report should be provided describing the funding structures put in place for the continued operation of administrative/organisational/clerical support to RCGs, and the specific support and operational tasks that will be carried out.