



**RCGs Secretariat**



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# **RCGs Secretariat support services and activities**

## **Mar. 2024- Feb. 2025 Report**

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## 2023-2024 Report – RCGs Secretariat support services and activities

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## 2023-2024 Report – RCGs Secretariat support services and activities

### I. Introduction

The RCGs Secretariat began its services in March 2023, following on from the progress and the results of the SECWEB project “Developing mechanisms to support the planning and execution of administrative tasks and the branding and online visibility of the Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs), with the aim to establish a long-term supportive structure”.

The Secretariat provides high quality administrative support to the Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs), developing coordination, facilitation, and liaison roles among the whole network of RCGs, and, in particular, with RCGs chairs, National Correspondents (NCs) and the European Commission. In addition, the Secretariat is responsible for maintaining and further develop the RCGs communication strategy and its activities.

Maintaining the Secretariat as a permanent support structure to the RCGs is essential to guarantee funding efficiency, to reinforce experts' engagement and for strengthening the regional cooperation in the context of the DCF.

This report covers the regular activities undertaken by the RCGs Secretariat from March 2024 to February 2025.

### 2. Scope

The activities and tasks covered under RCGs Secretariat regular services for the reporting period were presented at the NCs meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2024 and further discussed and agreed at the RCG ECON annual meeting, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2024.

The main tasks are presented in the table below:

List of tasks
<b>1. Daily regular operations and processes:</b>
Manage daily communication and correspondence
Maintaining basic protocols and organizational procedures
Maintaining working tools and repositories
Supporting consultation services
Communication and dissemination activities
Manage the Secretariat's legal, finances and staff obligations
<b>2. Communication support structure: RCGs website</b>
RCGs, ISSGs and Chairs' sections; Information HUB (incl. Stakeholders DB, news & newsletter); calendar; projects.
<b>3. Support to meetings and meetings' reporting*</b>
RCGs Annual technical meetings – Support
<b>3. Other meetings*</b>
Liaison meeting
RCGs pre & decision meeting
NCs meeting
<b>4. Support intersessional activity</b>
ISSGs general organizational activities ( <i>consultation processes, questionnaires</i> )

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### List of tasks

ISSGs meetings and workshops (draft official invitation, registration system, communication, doodle, virtual platform, meeting notes, minutes, etc.)

\* Please note that these activities are partially covered by SECWEB 2.0 project. More specifically the travel and accommodation costs of the Secretariat attendance to the RCGs meetings.

## 3. Services in 2024 -2025

### 3.1. Daily regular operations and processes

#### 3.1.1. Manage daily communication, correspondence and ad hoc requests

The main communication channel used by RCGs Secretariat in managing daily communications and *ad hoc* requests is the email. The email account [secretariat@fisheries-rcg.eu](mailto:secretariat@fisheries-rcg.eu) registered an increasing number of emails from the RCGs network; mainly from RCGs chairs, ISSGs chairs, DG MARE team and national correspondents.

In addition to the day-to-day communication, again this year some of the most relevant communication activities involved the final Regional Work Plans 2025-2027. The RCGs Secretariat followed and provided support to the last adjustments to the various RWP tables, final RWP submission to COM by RCGs chairs and publication of RWPs on the RCGs website to facilitate the access to information.

Throughout the year there was an active communication with RCGs chairs, in particular towards the organization of the respective annual meetings. In some RCGs like RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic the chairs have periodic meetings throughout the year in which the Secretariat takes part; during these meetings the communications are agreed with RCG chairs. In other cases, the RCGs Secretariat organized bilateral meetings with RCG chairs in order to coordinate the communication associated to different RCG activities.

As a result of this coordination approach the RCGs Secretariat can manage the communication to the RCGs network efficiently. The main communications associated with the RCG annual technical meetings were managed by the RCGs Secretariat in a timely manner, these are: the save-the-date, registration, agenda and instructions, reminders, SharePoint access, social dinner, follow up report contributions, distribution of draft report, and final report publication among others.

#### 3.1.2. Maintain basic protocols and organisational procedures

There are a number of procedures and protocols which are accessible on the RCGs website and updated periodically by the RCGs Secretariat in collaboration with RCG chairs. These are:

- *Rules of procedure*  
The RoPs: under each RCG microsite you will find the RoPs for the respective RCG.
- *Mandate and remits of the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic*  
[Mandate and remits RCG Baltic and NANSEA\\_v2](#)

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- *Terms of Reference*

In consultation with RCGs chairs, the ToRs for the new season, 2024-2025, have been updated and are available online under each RCG microsite on the web.

- *Guidance documents*

The Secretariat developed a series of guidance documents as part of the service contract by DG MARE (MARE/2023/LVP/0002). These documents were developed taking into consideration the experience gained supporting the RCGs over the recent years, and paying special attention to the needs identified during this process. The guidance documents are all available on the RCGs website:

### Discover Regional Coordination Groups for Fisheries Data Collection

This document covers, in just 18 pages, a range of topics from a background introduction about the DCF and the RCGs to the role of RCGs, the main actors involved, the RCGs annual work cycle and the different meetings, and a section on Frequently Asked Questions.

### RCGs Secretariat - Functions and working protocols

The document provides an overview of the RCGs Secretariat mandate and details on the administrative support to the RCGs, and in particular to the RCGs chairs. It is intended as a reference for the RCGs community to know what to expect from the Secretariat and improve the communication loop and ultimately, the impact of RCGs communication strategy.

### RCGs Templates

Compilation of the updated templates most frequently used by the RCGs. There is also a section dedicated to the Liaison Meeting.

### RCGs Virtual repositories and working spaces

Overview of the information repositories and virtual working spaces available for the use of the RCGs, particularly those managed by the RCGs Secretariat.

Additionally, the RCGs Secretariat foresees to progressively expand the list of guidance documents by incorporating some of the outcomes of SECWEB 2.0. Besides, facilitating the access to all the documents through a dedicated on-line library.

- *Supporting the development of Regional Work Plans*

During March 2024, the Secretariat supported the chairs of RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic in the review process of RWPs after STECF evaluation, collecting MS feedback for Table 1.3 for example, and supporting the communications regarding table 2.1 updates.

Additionally, during May 2024, the Secretariat provided support in formatting the final RWPs, in particular text boxes, upon request of DG MARE to harmonise the format among RWPs in line with the requirements for the DCF platform. Finally, by the end of August 2024 the Secretariat published the RWPs 2025 -2027 on the RCGs website to facilitate the access to the final documents in time for the preparation and submission of NWPs by the Member States.

- *Steering Committee for the Mediterranean & Black Sea Regional Database documents*

The Secretariat in collaboration with the chair of the Steering Committee for the Mediterranean & Black Sea Regional Database formatted and consolidated key documents for the Steering Committee,

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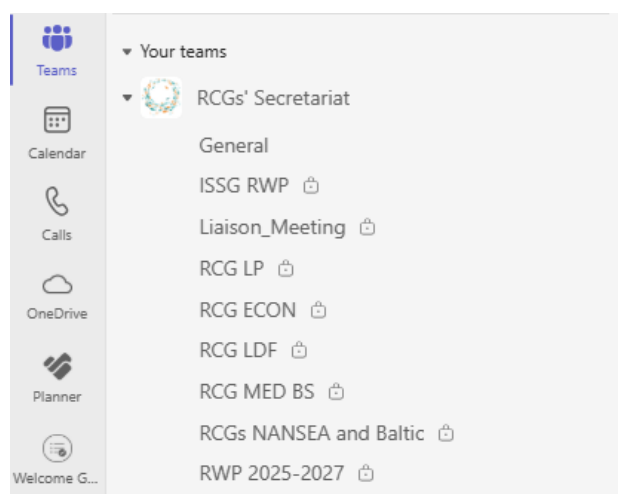
such as: Data Policy; Membership; and Guidelines. Not only paying attention to the RCGs visual identity but also including a table with history of changes to be able to track back any changes or amendments to the documents.

### 3.1.3. Maintain working tools and repositories

The maintenance of working tools and repositories involves a continuous communication flow with the RCGs network to guaranty the inputs and the most update information is always available and easy to access. As well as maintaining these working spaces, the Secretariat continues to advocate for their wider use among RCG network, in particular RCG chairs, as to guaranty a successful handover from one chair to the next RCG chair.

- *Virtual working spaces*

The **virtual working spaces** on Teams for each RCG have been maintained and updated with relevant information. The Secretariat manages the access to these working spaces, which are mainly used by the RCG chairs. In particular, in preparation for the respective RCG annual meetings, allowing RCG chairs to work collaboratively in the presentations; and after the meeting for the drafting of the RCG report. One of the advantages of these working spaces is the availability of historical records for the incoming chairs.



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- *Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements Repository*

The RCGs Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements' Repository has been updated with relevant agreements between MS. We have experienced that the communication flow with NCs in this regard has improved greatly.

- *Level of Ambitions interactive infographic*

The Level of Ambition interactive infographic is an output of Fishn'Co project. Recently, in close collaboration with ISSG Regional Work Plan (RWP) chairs, the Secretariat is evaluating the use of this tool and to what extend the principles set during Fishn'Co still apply. The Secretariat is compiling background information on the criteria used for the design and development of the tool with the objective to support further work within the ISSG RWP.

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- *Stakeholders database*

<https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/stakeholders/>

The process of populating the stakeholders database has shown little progress since last reporting period, being the lack of engagement by stakeholders to self-register, the main reason. The RCGs Secretariat has reevaluated the approach and has designed a new strategy to be implemented within SECWEB 2.0 project.

The new approach reconsiders the initial flow of information, instead of relaying on stakeholders to input their data, it will be the Secretariat creating the stakeholders accounts with basic information (name, email, organization) available from RCGs records and other public sources. After that the stakeholder will be informed and requested to further fill in their details on the database.

The steps for the account verification will have to be modified and adjusted accordingly in the system. The RCGs stakeholder's database is still hosted on EV ILVO servers, therefore these modifications will be done in collaboration with EV ILVO. Together with the setup of alerts when stakeholder's information is still missing.

This approach, we believe it could solve partially the problem of populating the database. However, stakeholder's collaboration remains crucial if we want to achieve a fully operational database.

Furthermore, additional possibilities to exploit this database, such as linking it with registration to meetings and events, or the foreseen consultation tool, are being assessed under SECWEB 2.0.

- *Other databases, logbooks or records*

ISSG participants databases, for the season 2024 – 2025. The RCGs Secretariat has liaised with RCGs chairs and NCs to update the list of national experts appointed to the various ISSGs within RCG Baltic, LDF, LP, Med&BS and NANSEA. RCG ECON follows a slightly different approach, opening a registration system for each ISSG meeting, the Secretariat also supported this process. As a result, the list of ISSGs participants have all been updated. At the moment ISSG participants list are kept in Excel files for each RCG. The idea is to integrate all this information within the stakeholder's database as part of the work in progress under SECWEB 2.0.

Online registration forms have been implemented for all the RCGs annual meetings, and for ISSG meetings on demand. The online forms are directly managed through the RCGs Secretariat SharePoint using google forms. This has proven very efficient and it has saved the RCG chairs a lot of time. Another advantage is that the presence lists are easily drawn from the registration list. Additionally, as part as of SECWEB 2.0 project during the second quarter of 2025 there are planned a series of co-design meetings to improve the functionalities of the event registration system.

### 3.1.4. *Support consultation processes*

During 2024/beginning 2025 the Secretariat gave support to the following consultation processes:

- *Questionnaire on fuel/energy use and data collection (RCG ECON)*

In May 2024, in preparation for the *RCG ECON annual meeting* and in collaboration with RCG ECON chairs the Secretariat distributed the questionnaire and received feedback from MS and experts. Timely reminders were sent and MS replies were compiled and forwarded for analysis to the RCG ECON chairs.



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- *Consultation on the public availability of survey data (RCG Med&BS)*

Following the discussions at the RCG Med&BS in August 2024, at the end of October 2024 the Secretariat in coordination with RCG chairs and DG MARE launched the consultation among national correspondents and survey coordinators. The description of the data sets and the consent to public availability of survey data were consolidated at the end of January 2025. DG MARE is currently liaising with JRC to release the survey data asap.

- *Survey on Assessing the associated workload and effectiveness of Fisheries Data Reporting in EU Member States (RCG Med&BS)*

The RCGs Secretariat implemented the survey online (on the EC survey platform <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/>) as a request of the ISSG End users chair; followed by the communication with specific survey link and indications for MS. Survey was launched at the end of February 2025, in preparation for the ISSG End user meeting scheduled on the 14th of March.

### 3.1.5. Communication and dissemination activities

The communication strategy focused on promoting the visibility and engagement towards the RCGs and the Intersessional Groups. In general terms, we can say that the RCGs visual identity has been consolidated in recent years, and all RCGs reports, presentations, or any other documents clearly show the branding of the RCGs.

- *e-newsletter & Social network maintenance and promotion*

The newsletter and social media have been maintained and fed periodically with the latest RCGs news and updates.

#### News

News with the RCGs highlights, in particular from RCGs annual meetings have been published on the news section. The sixth issue of the RCGs newsletter was released on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024. During 2025 the Secretariat will continue publishing news of interest for the RCGs community.

#### Social media

In parallel to the news section the Secretariat has been managing the Twitter (X) account. However, due to global trend on X, less transparency, disinformation, and paid features; the Secretariat is considering migrating from X to Bluesky, prior consultation to the RCGs. This migration is likely to be accomplished in the coming months.

#### Calendar

The dates of the RCGs annual technical meetings and ISSG meetings are updated regularly and can be consulted on the website. Here again, as part as SECWEB 2.0 project there are co-design activities planned to improve the functionalities of the actual calendar.

- *Corporate image and branding strategy maintenance*

The Secretariat has reinforced the use of the established RCGs visual identity using the corporate image in all communications and RCGs documents. Documents templates have been created/updated whenever needed for RCGs purposes. The Secretariat also tailored templates on request for several ISSG reports.



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- *Stakeholders' focal point and helpdesk for the RCGs network*

During 2024 the Secretariat has consolidated the relationships and working procedures not only with the RCG chairs but also with ISSG chairs, key end-users and RCGs experts. The RCGs Secretariat has consolidated its role within the RCGs network and more and more the working routines and flow of information occur naturally. One of the key aspects when we talk about regional coordination is that the Secretariat concentrates information from all RCGs across all regions becoming very useful source of information for effective coordination.

### 3.1.6. *Manage the Secretariat's legal, finances and staff obligations*

In 2024 -2025, the funding scenario for the RCGs Secretariat services followed that agreed on the 2024 RCGs Decision meeting. In which, each Member State (MS) contributes to the share of the service according to the amounts set in *Annex I - Details on the decision between the NCs on funding of the RCGs Secretariat 2024-2025*, [2024 RCGs Decision meeting report](#).

Based on the decision between the NCs referred above (Annex I, 2024 RCGs Decision meeting report), CETMAR submitted to each MS a formal offer for the provision of the "RCGs Secretariat services" for the period 2024-2025. MS could choose one invoice covering the two service periods or two separate invoices for each of the service periods.

Overall, 24 MS have accepted the service; the two remaining MS expressed difficulties for the service in 2024 and they will seek a solution in 2025. Upon receiving MS approval CETMAR adapted to the administrative procedure required by each MS. CETMAR tailored 24 different administrative procedures, from negotiated contract, direct invoicing, online invoices, split payments, etc. At the end of October 2024, CETMAR started issuing the invoices according to the systems set by each MS. This required a significant amount of administrative support not only for the invoicing process but also for the follow up of payments.

The Secretariat team run with the dedication of three members part time, administrative support and IT staff support. As well as the forefront Secretariat work there is a substantial amount of internal team work to make sure that the requests are duly and timely managed and to ensure the full coverage of the Secretariat services to all RCGs and their network.

### 3.2. Communication support structure: RCGs website

The [RCGs website](#) is a key element of the communication structure. The Secretariat is responsible for maintaining the website as well as updating and writing new content, creating new pages and functionality and removing outdated content.

During 2024 -2025, as part of the regular services, the Secretariat has accomplished a series of updates, such as:

- Contact information for RCG chairs
- NC's contact information on each of the RCG scope maps
- ToRs and RoPs
- [Calendar](#)

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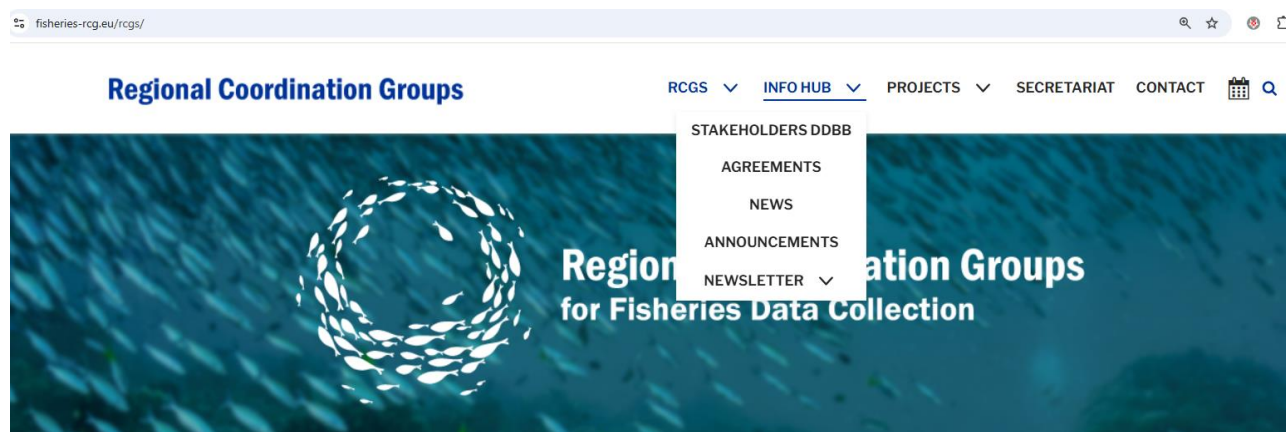
- [Agreements](#)
- [News](#)

Added new content:

- Bios on the [RCGs chairs section](#)
- List of [ISSGs](#)
- Publish: RCGs 2024 annual reports; 2024 Decision Meeting report; 2024 Liaison Meeting report; RVPs 2025 – 2027.
- Added information of new projects relevant for the RCGs network: [DIASPARA](#); [SECWEB 2.0](#); [IMPROFISH](#); [ITUNNES](#); [GENDC](#); [RDBFIS](#)

New sections:

- Info hub section was created to group in one place several related topics. Within this section a new [Announcements](#) page was created.



- [Secretariat](#)

Since the creation of the RCGs website a few years ago (SECWEB project), the amount of information to be displayed on the website has increased significantly; overall, compromising website navigation and functionality. With this in mind, together with the continuous feedback that the Secretariat receives from the RCGs network, CETMAR submitted the project proposal, SECWEB 2.0 – *Evolving the on-line working environment, tools and services of the RCGs Secretariat for the RCGs community*. SECWEB 2.0 project started in June 2024. The upgrading of RCGs website is an important component within the scope of SECWEB 2.0.

### 3.3. Support to meetings and meetings' reporting

Supporting the 6 RCGs in their Annual Technical Meetings has been a priority for the RCGs Secretariat during 2024. The attendance to the meetings has been covered by SECWEB 2.0 project, this is the accommodation and travel cost were covered under SECWEB 2.0.

The participation of the Secretariat in the annual meetings is a valuable experience both in terms of the support provided to the RCGs but also for the first-hand information gathered when participating in the

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meetings, letting the Secretariat understand the different dynamics. This information is of crucial importance to be able to tailor the Secretariat support accordingly.

In general terms, we present here the main support activities carried out, it is not intended to be an exhaustive list of activities but more an illustration of the portfolio of activities available for future references.

### 3.3.1. RCG ECON - 2024 Technical Meeting, 3 to 6 June, Athens, Greece

- *Prior to the meeting*
  - Communicate Save-the-date, preliminary agenda, organizational tips.
  - Set up the registration system.
  - Launch the consultation on fuel/energy use and data collection and followed up on questionnaire feedback in order to facilitate the discussions during RCG ECON meeting.

- *During the meeting*

One member of the Secretariat team attended the meeting physically in Athens and a second member attended virtually.

- Take detailed notes, in particular during the discussions that took place in plenary after the presentations.
- Support point for online participants.
- Presentation on the status of the RCGs Secretariat and SECWEB 2.0 project.

- *After the meeting*

- Follow up with presenters and rapporteurs the contributions to the report, compilation of documents
- Report co-edition
- Distribute the draft report for feedback
- Integration of feedback in consultation with chairs
- Final editing and publication of report on the RCGs website [https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Report\\_RCG-ECON\\_TM-2024\\_final\\_2024\\_09\\_08.pdf](https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Report_RCG-ECON_TM-2024_final_2024_09_08.pdf)

### 3.3.2. RCG NANSEA and Baltic - 2024 Technical Meeting, 11 to 14 June, Bremerhaven, Germany

- *Prior to the meeting*
  - Take part in the preparatory meetings with RCG chairs.
  - Communicate Save-the-date, preliminary agenda, organizational tips.
  - Set up the registration system.
  - Act as contact point for managing access to RCG SharePoint within ICES.
  - Distribute templates (presentation and instructions for presenters and rapporteurs).
  - Elaborate the technical meeting report template.
  - Upload “General information” to the SharePoint.

- *During the meeting*

One member of the Secretariat team attended the meeting physically in Bremerhaven, Germany and a second member attended virtually some of the afternoon sessions.

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- Responsible for the presence list.
- Take detailed notes, in particular during the discussions that took place in plenary after the presentations.
- Meet with chairs to draw conclusions and outputs of the meeting.
- Taking pictures, managing social media.
- In collaboration with ISSG NCs, coordinated session with RCG ECON on RCG Secretariat status and SECWEB 2.0 project
- *After the meeting*
  - Follow up with presenters and rapporteurs the contributions to the report, compilation of documents
  - Report co-edition
  - Distribute the draft report for feedback
  - Integration of feedback in consultation with chairs
  - Final editing and publication of report on the RCGs website [https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2024-RCG-NANSEA-RCG-Baltic-TM\\_-Part-I\\_Report\\_CLEAN.pdf](https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2024-RCG-NANSEA-RCG-Baltic-TM_-Part-I_Report_CLEAN.pdf)

### 3.3.3. RCG LP- 2024 Technical Meeting, 24 to 26 June, Olhão, Portugal

- *Prior to the meeting*
  - Several preparatory meetings: briefing with incoming chair; agree upon the role and activities for the Secretariat.
  - Assist with the preparation of preliminary agenda.
  - Communicate Save-the-date, preliminary agenda, organizational tips
  - Set up the registration system.
  - Act as contact point for managing access to RCG SharePoint within ICES.

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- *During the meeting*

One member of the Secretariat team attended the meeting physically in Olhão.

- Take detailed notes, in particular during the discussions that took place in plenary after the presentations.
- Presentation on the status of the RCGs Secretariat and SECWEB 2.0.
- Managed online meeting platform for virtual participants.
- *After the meeting*
  - Follow up with presenters and rapporteurs the contributions to the report, compilation of documents.
  - Report co-edition
  - Distribute the draft report for feedback
  - Integration of feedback in consultation with chairs
  - Final editing and publication of report on the RCGs website [https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024\\_RCG-LP\\_Report\\_final.pdf](https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024_RCG-LP_Report_final.pdf)

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### 3.3.4. RCG LDF- 2024 Technical Meeting, 2 to 5 July, Cádiz, Spain

- *Prior to the meeting*
  - Communicate Save-the-date, preliminary agenda, organizational tips
  - Set up the registration system.
  - Act as contact point for managing access to RCG SharePoint within ICES.
  - Prepare formal letters to facilitate the attendance of Mauritanian experts
  - Distribute information about social dinner, gather feedback.

- *During the meeting*

One member of the Secretariat team attended the meeting physically in Cádiz, Spain and a second member joined virtually.

- Take detailed notes, in particular during the discussions that took place in plenary after the presentations.
- Presentation on the status of the RCGs Secretariat and SECWEB 2.0 project.
- Taking pictures, managing social media.

- *After the meeting*

- Follow up with presenters and rapporteurs the contributions to the report, compilation of documents
- Report co-edition
- Distribute the draft report for feedback
- Integration of feedback in consultation with chair
- Final editing and publication of report on the RCGs website [https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024\\_RCG-LDF\\_Report\\_final.pdf](https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024_RCG-LDF_Report_final.pdf)

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### 3.3.5. RCG Med&BS - 2024 Technical Meeting, 26 to 29 August, Montpellier, France

- *Prior to the meeting*
  - Communicate Save-the-date, preliminary agenda, organizational tips
  - Set up the registration system.
  - Act as contact point for managing access to RCG SharePoint within ICES.

- *During the meeting*

One member of the Secretariat team attended the meeting physically in Montpellier.

- Supervision of SharePoint document uploads
- Taking detailed notes, in particular during the discussions that took place in plenary after the presentations.
- Provided online meeting platform for virtual participants.
- Presentation on the status of the RCGs Secretariat and SECWEB 2.0 project.
- Taking pictures, managing social media

- *After the meeting*

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- Follow up with presenters and rapporteurs the contributions to the report, compilation of documents.
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- Integration of feedback in consultation with chairs
- Final editing and publication of report on the RCGs website [https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2024\\_RCG-MedBS-TM-Report\\_final.pdf](https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2024_RCG-MedBS-TM-Report_final.pdf)

### 3.4. Other meetings

#### 3.4.1. 2024 Liaison Meeting, 24-25 September, Brussels

- *Prior to the meeting*
  - The RCGs Secretariat participated in several preparatory meetings with the LM chair in order to coordinate the communications regarding the timeslots in the agenda and intervention by key speakers, in particular with RCG chairs.
  - Revision of the LM agenda in collaboration with LM chairs
  - Facilitate template for presentations, template for report
  - Communications and indications regarding the use of SharePoint

- *During the meeting*

One member of the Secretariat team attended the meeting physically in Brussels, and one more member followed the meeting remotely.

- Take notes during the meeting, in particular if there were any comments after the presentation of the decisions and recommendations.

- *After the meeting*

- Follow up report contributions, send reminders and compilation of documents.
- Report co-edition
- Distribute the draft report for feedback
- Integration of feedback in consultation with LM chair
- Final editing and publication of report on the RCGs website [https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/21st-Liaison-Meeting\\_Report\\_final.pdf](https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/21st-Liaison-Meeting_Report_final.pdf)

#### 3.4.2. 2024 RCGs Decision Meeting, 25 September, Brussels

- *Prior to the meeting*
  - Develop preliminary agenda
  - Compile in a dossier all the recommendation and decisions from the different RCGs, share with NCs and RCG chairs

- *During the meeting*

One member of the Secretariat team attended the meeting physically in Brussels, and one more member followed the meeting remotely.

- Facilitate the meeting, opening and introduction of each RCG chair



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- Take notes during the meeting, in particular if there were any comments after the presentation of the decisions and recommendations.
- *After the meeting*
  - Update dossier with comments and relevant information, decisions agreed or not, etc.
  - Distribute and publish the final RCGs Decision Meeting report on the website [https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Report\\_RCGs-Decision-Meeting\\_2024.pdf](https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Report_RCGs-Decision-Meeting_2024.pdf)

### 3.4.3. National correspondents meeting

- *7th March 2024.*

The RCGs Secretariat presented the scope of the new project SECWEB 2.0 approved under the CINEA call: EMFAF-2023-PIA-Fisheries Scientific Advice—*Improving scientific knowledge to strengthen the science-basis of management decisions under the CFP* and explained the need to maintain the financial support from MS's to guaranty the full set of services provided by the RCGs Secretariat.

In light of this situation, the ISSG National Correspondents coordinated several meetings at the RCG ECON and RCG NANSEA and Baltic annual meetings (2024), as a result the NCs reached the decision on funding the RCGs Secretariat 2024-2025.

- *26th September 2024*

During the NCs meeting in September, the Secretariat presented SECWEB 2.0 progress and delved into the project's implementation approach for co-designing the new tools. In addition, the Secretariat also explained the procedure to be followed with MS for the invoicing of the Secretariat services in 2024, based on the NCs decision on funding the RCGs Secretariat 2024-2025, and resolved any questions that arose in this regard.

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## 3.5. Support intersessional activity

### 3.5.1. RCG ECON

During 2024 -2025, the Secretariat gave support to several ECON ISSGs:

- *ISSG New social variables*  
The ISSG *Exploring options for data collection for new social variables* met 18-19 Sep 2024 online. The Secretariat sent the save-the-date, managed the registration for the meeting and the online platform. In addition, a shared folder in OneDrive was created for the purpose of the meeting. However, the folder proved problematic for some participants as they could not access a Microsoft environment. The meeting was recorded and the transcripts were made available for the ISSG chairs. The Secretariat distributed the final concept note as a result of the meeting.
- *ISSG Methodological issues*  
The ISSG *on Methodological issues* will meet hybrid from 28-30 April 2025 in Kavala, Greece. The Secretariat, in collaboration with the ISSG chair supported the communications, managed the event registration, and facilitated the meeting platform and distribution of the questionnaire. Further follow up actions are expected beyond February 2025.



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### 3.5.2. RCG NANSEA and Baltic

The Secretariat supported the activity of several ISSGs and the activity of the RCG chairs through periodical meetings throughout the year.

- *RCG chairs meetings throughout the year cycle*

The RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic despite of having numerous ISSGs to handle and a large number of experts in their network they benefit from long-standing established procedures and logbooks. Which makes it easier for chairs to keep track of all their duties and activities throughout the year. In order to keep track of the good flow of the RCGs work, RCG chairs meet regularly, one member of the RCGs Secretariat normally participates in the chairs meetings.

This approach facilitates the follow up of RCGs/ISSGs issues by the Secretariat and the coordination and communication support provided by the Secretariat is more efficient.

- *ISSG End users*

The ISSG End users, composed by the RCGs chairs and key end users, ICES Secretariat and DG MARE, has met twice since last activity report, in March and Sep 2024. An additional meeting is planned in March 2025. The RCGs Secretariat is actively involved in these meetings giving organizational support: setting the doodle; convening the meeting; providing minutes but also taking part in some of the technical discussions, particularly those relevant to streamline the communication between RCGs and end-users and the further refinement of the recommendations and decisions exchange platform, for example.

- *ISSG Regional Work Plan*

The Secretariat is actively involved in the ISSG RWP, taking part in bilateral preparatory meeting with the ISSG RWP chairs and the general ISSG meetings. The Secretariat provided notes and supported communications. In addition, the Secretariat is providing support to the ISSG chairs revisiting some of the outputs from Fishn'Co project.

- *ISSG Surveys*

The Secretariat supported the communications with ISSG Surveys participants prior to the meeting in March 2025.

### 3.5.3. RCG Med&BS

- *Steering Committee for the Med&BS Regional Database*

The Steering Committee for the Med&BS Regional Database reconvened in 2024. The Secretariat supported the SC chair in organizing a first online meeting 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2024; providing doodle, meeting platform, sending communications and report template. After the meeting the Secretariat supported the revision and co-edition of report. The final meeting report is expected to be released in March 2025.

- *ISSG End users*

The Secretariat supported the work of the ISSG End users in several ways, from setting doodle, communications with ISSG participants and provide the meeting platform for the upcoming meeting in March 2025. In addition, the Secretariat implemented the survey online in the EU platform and launched the survey. Further support from the Secretariat is envisaged during and after the meeting.

## 4. Conclusion

In 2024-25 the services provided by the RCGs Secretariat in support of the RCGs have been developed with the premise of maintaining service quality, providing an agile reaction and fostering continuous improvement. The Secretariat's work load has increased over the last year as a result of an improved engagement with the RCGs network and a reliable relationship; receiving more support requests, in particular RCGs and ISSG chairs, and queries from the RCGs network. The experience gained over the last four year as Secretariat service provider has allowed the Secretariat to establish priorities and achieve more efficient procedures.

Being aware of the differences in the level of engagement between RCGs, the Secretariat has dedicated special effort to strengthen the relationship with all RCGs, increasing the number of bilateral meetings with the RCGs chairs for example with the aim to achieve a more levelled engagement across RCGs. The interactions and feedback with the RCGs chairs, and the network as a whole, have improved since last year.

The Secretariat is also aware of the differences in the functioning between RCGs, that in most cases are marked by the nature of the data/fisheries within the region and fully respects these singularities. Moreover, this is a key topic that the Secretariat has in mind when developing/proposing mechanisms to streamline communications and other support activities.

During the reporting period, the Secretariat has delivered support services to all RCGs and is also currently involved in the implementation of SECWEB 2.0 project. SECWEB 2.0 is aimed at evolving the on-line working environment, tools and services of the RCGs Secretariat for the RCGs community. In order to maintain these support structure and services beyond 2026 it will be essential to have a long-term funding plan for the Secretariat which is currently under the remit of ISSG NCs.