



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations



REGIONAL FISHERY BODY¹ SECRETARIATS' NETWORK

Eighth Meeting

Videoconference

24 February 2021 (16:00-19:00 hrs CET)²

25 February 2021 (00:00-03:00 hrs CET)

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The 7th Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network Meeting (para. 138 of the report refers) agreed to:
 - “prepare a draft of the RSN ToRs, including simple and relevant points as referred to during the session, and that the related document will be developed by a drafting committee consisting of the secretaries of NEAFC, PSC, GFCM, ICCAT and FCWC, with the RSN Secretariat working as the coordinator. The meeting also agreed that, following the development of the ToRs, the RoP will be coherently amended, and that a survey questionnaire will be prepared to define the RSN's financial needs and potential donors.”
- RSN-8 will have mainly an informative nature and no decisions are expected. The finalization of pending matters such as the adoption of the revised ToR for RSN or the amendment of RoP will be kept on hold or organized by correspondence.

¹ Documents can be consulted at <http://www.fao.org/fishery/nems/41296/en>

² Rescheduled from 11 and 17 July 2020.

The Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN) was established in the margins of FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in 1999 to facilitate exchange of information and identification of common interests among Regional Fishery Advisory Bodies (RFABs) and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and Arrangements (RFMO/As) through FAO. RSN has adopted the following:

Draft Terms of Reference for the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network

1. Legal status

The Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (henceforth RSN) is a mechanism coordinated and supported by FAO with functional autonomy from each Regional Fisheries Advisory Body (RFAB) and Regional Fisheries Management Organization or Arrangement (RFMO/A)³ to serve the common interests of the member organizations. The RSN represents the network in the matters entrusted to it; it does not represent each one of its members nor FAO.

2. Seat

The RSN Secretariat is located at the FAO headquarters in Rome. FAO provides the Secretary of the Network, including for the convening of its meetings and, among others, is responsible for meeting logistics, oversight and functioning of its activities.

3. Overall purpose

The RSN purpose is to facilitate exchanges among RFABs and RFMO/As secretariats and identification of common interests in order to promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, and support their activities, including, when and as appropriate, their coordination in the representation of their respective positions and policies for the better implementation of their mandate. It does not prejudice the establishment, operation and cooperation mechanisms among RFABs and RFMO/As.

RSN will encourage exchanges among all RFABs and RFMO/As secretariats and identification of issues of common interest, in order to:

- i. identify and address common problems and challenges faced by the secretariats in achieving goals of the member organizations;
- ii. develop strategies and mechanisms to address those challenges;
- iii. share experiences and lessons learned;
- iv. improve the effectiveness of the respective RFABs and RFMO/As;
- v. achieve coherent management approaches among RFABs and RFMO/As;
- vi. raise public awareness of the importance of RFBs and the RSN;
- vii. advocate for the RFBs when requested and as appropriate;
- viii. promote the definition of common standards and practices related to responsible fisheries and aquaculture, technical and operational aspects, and related issues;
- ix. promote good practices.

³ RFMOs and RFABs are collectively referred to as regional fishery bodies (RFBs)

4. Activities

To reach its objectives, the RSN:

- i. convenes regular and intersessional meetings of its members, as appropriate;
- ii. provides the appropriate support to its members, as required, including in terms of coordination and representation of RSN members in international fora and processes, such as COFI, meetings on law of the sea under the aegis of the UN General Assembly, relevant UN technical agencies, and others;
- iii. facilitates adequate exchange of information, including through the production and distribution of a magazine and the operation of an updated website, sharing of experiences and lessons learnt;
- iv. raises public awareness of RSN and RSN Members' work by increasing their visibility;
- v. advocates in support of RFBs;
- vi. assists RFBs in the implementation of international fisheries policy instruments (Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, combat IUU fishing, conserve biodiversity etc.);
- vii. promotes common technical standards and practices related to responsible fisheries and aquaculture, and correlated issues;
- viii. undertakes capacity development initiatives and activities as necessary and appropriate;
- ix. plays an active role as an interface between RFBs and FAO;
- x. undertakes all the necessary activities to achieve its purposes.

5. Principles

The RSN Secretariat shall promote respect, mutual goodwill, transparency, accord each other all reasonable exchange of information and assistance as expected among institutions committed to the highest standards of conservation and management of capture fisheries and aquaculture resources and their related ecosystems.

The RSN Secretariat shall operate according to FAO rules and procedures.

6. RSN structure

In addition to the representatives of the secretariats of the RFABs and RFMO/As concerned, the Network comprises a Chair and a Vice-Chair, to be elected among the representatives of the secretariats for a fixed term as outlined in the RSN Rules of Procedure, a Secretary and supporting staff who are provided by FAO. The Chair of the RSN works closely with the Secretary of the RSN to plan meetings as required and to set the agenda, as well as the other activities to be carried out within the framework of the Network. The Chair may be consulted in the implementation of decisions or recommendations adopted by consensus at the RSN meetings.

7. Meetings

The RSN meets periodically in the margins of every COFI session, according to the RSN Rules of Procedure. However, intersessional ad hoc meetings may be convened at global and regional level.

The RSN will establish, when deemed appropriate, working groups to review or investigate specific issues and report back to the RSN.

8. TORs Revision

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed upon request of at least five Members to make changes, as deemed necessary, which will be submitted to the Secretariat for their circulation among all members of the RSN no later than two months prior any RSN meeting in accordance with rule 5(1) of the RSN Rules of Procedure.