



RULES OF PROCEDURE

OF THE

NORTH WESTERN WATERS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Although the North Western Waters Advisory Council operates in three languages (English, French and Spanish) the definitive language for the text of this document is English. The texts in French and Spanish are for information purposes only.

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1. The first Rules of Procedure for the North Western Waters AC were ratified at the first General Assembly of the NWWAC held on 30 of September 2005 under the shape of the Regional Advisory Council, where the first Executive Committee was subsequently appointed.

Thereafter, the Rules of Procedure were revised in 2015 in order to reflect the name change of the North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council (NWWAC) to North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

These Rules of Procedure were last updated and approved by the General Assembly on 01 July 2021.

OBJECTIVES

2. The NWWAC shall fulfil the role of an Advisory Council (AC) as described in Regulation (EC) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, Part XI and Annex III, and in the Commission Delegated Regulation (EC) 2015/242 of 9 October 2014, laying down detailed rules on the functioning of the Advisory Councils under the Common Fisheries Policy, as amended by (EU) 2017/1575.
3. The NWWAC will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy as described in Art. 2 of 1380/2013 as in effect at any given time by developing recommendations and suggestions that represent stakeholder's opinions on matters of fisheries management in respect of the North Western Waters.
4. Recommendations and suggestions shall be provided to the European Commission, the group of relevant Member States and individual Member States of the European Union as decided by the NWWAC. Recommendations and suggestions shall also be made available on the NWWAC website and forwarded to any other bodies as decided by the NWWAC.
5. The NWWAC shall be an equal opportunities organisation and shall not discriminate against membership on the grounds of race, gender or disability.

ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

6. As prescribed in (EU) 1380/2013 Art. 45.2, the Advisory Council consists of a General Assembly and an Executive Committee, including, as appropriate, a Secretariat and Working Groups to deal



with issues of regional cooperation pursuant to Article 18 of the CFP, and shall adopt the measures necessary for its functioning.

General Assembly

7. The General Assembly is composed of all the members of the NWWAC. Membership of the General Assembly of the NWWAC shall be open to organisations from the fisheries sector and other interest groups (OIG) affected by the Common Fisheries Policy in the North Western Waters, as outlined in article 45.1 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 and who support the objectives of the NWWAC as set out in these rules of procedure and who are admitted to membership in accordance with the procedure in Art. 8 below.
8. Potential new member organisations for the NWWAC shall send in a completed application form available on the NWWAC website to the Secretariat of the NWWAC. The Secretariat of the NWWAC shall refer all applications to the Member State(s) in the territory of which the applicant organisation is established for agreement. Should the decision be favourable, the application will then be submitted to the Executive Committee to endorse that due process has taken place. Membership shall start when the Executive Committee has approved and the NWWAC Secretariat has received the membership fee.
9. Member organisations are hereafter also referred to as “members” of the NWWAC.
10. Each member organisation shall appoint a permanent delegate for participation in the work of the NWWAC. This permanent delegate shall represent the member organisation for all purposes and may take part in deliberations and votes and stand as a candidate or be eligible for the various offices.
11. Each member organisation may replace its permanent delegate at any time through explicit delegation by written notice to the Secretariat.
12. Whereas 60 % of the seats in the Executive Committee are allotted to sector organisations and 40 % to other interest groups to guarantee a balanced representation of all stakeholders (as described in (EC) 2015/242 article 2.2 and 2.3, amended by (EU) 2017/1575, and as in effect at any given time), the 60/40 balance of sector organisation and other interest groups shall be maintained in the General Assembly *where possible*.
13. Decisions by the General Assembly shall be decided by a simple majority vote.

Executive Committee

14. Based on designations from both groups and in accordance with Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/1575, the General Assembly appoints an Executive Committee. 60 % of the



seats in the Executive Committee are allotted to sector organisations and 40 % to other interest groups.

15. The General Assembly shall appoint, for a (renewable) period of three years, organisations which will make up the Executive Committee and which in turn will appoint a permanent representative. Any changes to the persons nominated as members by their organisation shall be made 48 hours in advance of any meeting of the Executive Committee, in writing, to the Secretariat of the NWWAC with copy to the Chairperson of the Executive Committee.
16. The Executive Committee shall be set up according to the delegated regulation as in effect at any given time and consist of up to 25 members. Membership of the Executive Committee of the NWWAC shall consist of:
 - a. Two representatives of the catching sub-sector (ship-owners, small-scale fishermen, employed fishermen and producer organisations) each from Belgium, Spain and The Netherlands, and three each from France and Ireland.
 - b. Three other representatives of the North Western Waters fisheries (where appropriate, aquaculture operators, and representatives of the processing and marketing sectors in line with (EU) 2017/1575).
 - c. Ten representatives of other interest groups (in particular environmental organisations and consumer groups) with an interest in the fisheries of the North Western Waters.
17. After consulting with the Commission, the General Assembly may appoint a further five members (increasing the membership of the Executive Committee to 30) to ensure appropriate representation of small-scale fleets (as described in (EU) 2017/1575 article 1.2(b)).
18. General elections for Executive Committee membership
 - a. Election announcements shall be made by the Secretariat at the summer meetings (usually July).
 - b. Deadline for nominations shall be one month following the announcement.
 - c. Nominations must be made via email to the Secretariat.
 - d. The Secretariat shall collate the list of nominated organisations. If more nominations are received than seats available, the Secretariat shall communicate this to the respective college and ask for the college to resolve this issue internally in line with Art. 18 (e).
 - e. In accordance with the procedures identified in (EU) 2015/242 as amended by (EU) 2017/1575, both categories have the right to decide autonomously on their representation in the Executive Committee which shall be appointed by the General Assembly.
 - f. Results of the votes shall be announced at the General Assembly which then appoints the new Executive Committee.



- g. Each member of the NWWAC may only occupy one seat in the Executive Committee.

19. Nomination of Executive Committee members

- a. Where an Executive Committee seat allotted to the sector organisation group is vacant and available, the sector organisation group members of the General Assembly shall designate a candidate organisation, that does not yet hold an Executive Committee seat, chosen unanimously where possible, but otherwise by a simple majority.
- b. Where an Executive Committee seat allotted to the other interest groups is vacant and available, the other interest group members of the General Assembly shall designate a candidate organisation, that does not yet hold an Executive Committee seat, chosen unanimously where possible, but otherwise by a simple majority.
- c. Candidates to the Executive Committee, so designated, must be confirmed by the General Assembly, unanimously where possible, but otherwise by a simple majority.
- d. When nominating a member of its group for a vacant seat on the Executive Committee seat, both sector organisations and other interest groups shall inform the Secretariat of the nomination. The Secretariat shall communicate every nomination to all members of the General Assembly.
- e. Within a period of one week, the members of the General Assembly shall communicate their approval or disapproval of this nomination to the Secretariat. Approval shall be made by simple majority. Should the candidate not receive approval, the Secretariat shall communicate the result to the General Assembly.

20. There is no requirement to fill all available Executive Committee seats. Where more than one Executive Committee seat is available to the sector organisations or to the other interest groups, the procedure outlined in Article 18 (a)-(e) remains applicable.

21. The Executive Committee of the NWWAC, in consultation with the Member States concerned, may seek to terminate the membership of any person or organisation which in their opinion is not affected by the Common Fisheries Policy in the North Western Waters or does not support the objectives of the NWWAC as laid out in these rules of procedure. The final decision on termination of membership shall be decided by common agreement between the concerned Member States. Termination comes into effect on the date of notice of termination to the member organisation. Membership fees may be returned to the member organisation on a pro rata basis.

22. If an organisation terminates its membership of the General Assembly or Executive Committee then its nominated representative on either the General Assembly or Executive Committee shall also terminate membership. Termination comes into effect on the first day of the next financial year following notification of the Secretariat.



23. The Executive Committee shall steer and manage the tasks of the Advisory Council in accordance with Article 44(2) and (3) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013. It acts as a focus for the NWWAC as well as directing its activities. The Executive Committee shall exercise the powers of the Advisory Council, decide upon general policy, direct the affairs of the Advisory Council and be responsible for the preparation and forwarding of recommendations and suggestions on the North Western Waters fisheries to the bodies defined in Article 4.
24. The Executive Committee shall prepare an annual report, an annual work plan and an annual budget to be approved by the members of the NWWAC at the General Assembly and forwarded to the Commission and Member States. At the annual General Assembly, the Chairperson and the Secretariat shall report to the members of the NWWAC on the year's activities and present the annual accounts on behalf of the Executive Committee.
25. The Executive Committee shall adopt recommendations and suggestions as referred to in Article 44(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 and acts as the final arbiter of all recommendations, opinions and advice issued by the North Western Waters Advisory Council and approves, amends or rejects, as appropriate, its recommendations, opinions and advice.
26. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall take place at least three times each year.
27. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be open to the public according to the rules specified in Annex 4 unless, otherwise decided by a majority decision of the Executive Committee at the beginning of the meeting.
28. The Executive Committee shall inform the General Assembly of relevant issues, decisions, and decision-making processes.
29. Members of the Executive Committee shall behave in the best interests of the NWWAC to further the aims and objectives laid down in this document and shall be accountable to the General Assembly.
30. At least two thirds of the members of the Executive Committee must be present for the Executive Committee to perform its full functions. If a vote is taken at Executive Committee meetings, only members of the Executive Committee (excluding the Chairperson) shall be entitled to vote, and at least two thirds of the current number of members per college of the Executive Committee shall be present.
31. Where a decision needs to be made by the NWWAC Executive Committee, the Secretariat shall initiate the process by sending an email including all relevant details to the members of the Executive Committee. The deadline for decision must be identified in the correspondence and will be no less than 7 calendar days.



32. Recommendations adopted by the Executive Committee shall be made available immediately to the General Assembly, the Commission, Member States concerned and, upon request, to any member of the public ((EU) 1380/2013 Annex III, Art. 2(f)).

The Chairperson of the Executive Committee and the General Assembly

33. To be known as the Chairperson of the NWWAC, shall be nominated and elected by majority of the members of the Executive Committee for a (renewable) term of three years.
34. The Chairperson shall play an impartial role, independent of the different interests represented on the Executive Committee. The Chairperson of the NWWAC shall not have a vote within the Executive Committee.
35. In the event that the Chairperson is drawn from the members of the Executive Committee, a substitute member shall be nominated in writing by the organisation which the Chairperson formerly represented.
36. Election procedure for the Chairperson of the NWWAC
- a. Call for applications
 - Call open for three months following announcement at NWWAC spring meetings (March) of the election year
 - Open to all the members of the General Assembly and outside candidates
 - Any nomination must be made by NWWAC members and seconded by another member
 - Nominees to make a presentation at the July meeting of the Executive Committee
 - The Executive Committee to ratify nominees
 - Secretariat to provide tender specs and forms to ratified nominees
 - Deadline for written applications 31 July of the election year
 - b. Evaluation Committee to be appointed by the Executive Committee
 - Composition: 3-5 members and Secretariat as observers
 - Main duties: Checking of eligibility (i.e. selection and award) criteria and assessment of economic offer (following the principle of “best value for money”).
 - c. Evaluation Committee’s decision to revert to the Executive Committee for endorsement at the September meeting of the Executive Committee
 - d. Announcement and introduction of the elected Chairperson to the General Assembly at the September meeting



37. In the event that no new nominations are received for the position of Chairperson of the NWWAC, as established in paragraph 33 hereinbefore, the current Chair can be re-elected for a renewed 3 year period and the incumbent Chairperson's contract can be rolled over for an additional 3 year term of office with his/her agreement and the approval of the General Assembly.
38. In the event that there are no new nominations for the position of Chairperson of the NWWAC and the incumbent Chairperson cannot continue for a continued 3 year term, the incumbent Chairperson shall continue his/her office in an emergency function for a maximum of one additional year.
39. . Nevertheless, in the event that the incumbent Chairperson is not in position to take over the emergency function, the Vice-chairs will jointly carry over the office in an emergency function for a maximum of one additional year. In this case, the new call for nominations shall be initiated immediately.
40. In the event that the incumbent Chair at any moment cannot continue holding the office for any justified reason, the Vice-Chairs shall jointly take over the office and a call for nominations shall be initiated immediately.
41. No Chairperson shall occupy the role of Chairperson of the NWWAC for more than 10 consecutive years.

The Vice Chairperson(s) of the Executive Committee

42. Three members, two nominated from within the industry college and one nominated from within the OIG college, shall be appointed by the members of the Executive Committee for a (renewable) term of three years. The Vice-Chairperson(s) shall be a member(s) of the Executive Committee and shall have a vote.
43. Nominations must be made by Executive Committee members during the first meeting of the newly elected Executive Committee and seconded by another Executive Committee member.
44. Members of the Executive Committee will vote for Vice-chairpersons in an open ballot.
45. If the same amount of votes is received by two or more candidates, the Secretariat shall initiate a secret second ballot via electronic procedure within one week of the first ballot held.

The Rapporteur of the NWWAC

46. For meetings at which the Secretariat is not taking up this role, a rapporteur can be appointed by the members of the Executive Committee for a (renewable) term of three years. The Rapporteur



does not need to be a member of the Executive Committee. The Rapporteur shall not have a vote unless the Rapporteur is a member of the Executive Committee.

Working Groups

47. The Executive Committee of the NWWAC will coordinate the day-to-day activities of the NWWAC and its Working Groups and will be the final arbitrator of all advice and opinion issued by the NWWAC. Working Groups will report directly to the Executive Committee.
48. The work of the NWWAC is organised as identified in Art. 20 of the NWWAC statutes. These arrangements shall not preclude future changes to the areas covered by the working groups. Annex 1 provides an overview of the current structure of the AC.
49. Members of the General Assembly can become a member of a Working Group when they are appointed by the Executive Committee. Membership shall start when the NWWAC Secretariat has received the Working Group related membership fee.
50. Members of the regional Working Groups must be members of the NWWAC General Assembly and shall ensure, as far as is practicable, that there is appropriate continuity of membership. Members of the Horizontal Working Group must be members of one of the regional Working Groups or the Executive Committee.
51. The Secretariat shall publish the composition of the Working Groups for information on the NWWAC website.
52. Working Groups will actively encourage the participation of relevant experts and observers in their work.
53. Each Working Group shall elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chair, for a (renewable) period of three years via open ballot under point one of the agenda during its meeting directly prior to the relevant Annual General meeting. If the Chairperson is appointed from the industry college, the Vice-Chair shall be appointed from the OIG college and vice versa where possible.
 - a. Members will be notified of the upcoming elections in the Working Group meeting prior to the election (usually the summer meeting) and asked for verbal expressions of interest.
 - b. These shall be relayed to the Working Group at the following meeting at the start of the election process.
 - c. Each member of the relevant Working Group shall have one vote which shall be exercised by hand signal during the voting procedure.



54. A Chairperson of a Working Group who is also an elected member of the Executive Committee shall retain the right to vote on all matters at all meetings of the Executive Committee.
55. A Chairperson of a Working Group who is not an elected member of the Executive Committee shall attend Executive Committee meetings as an active (non-voting) observer.
56. Action points agreed by the members of the Working Group will be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval.
57. Working Groups shall submit recommendations in writing to the Executive Committee for consideration. The Chairperson shall speak for the Working Group and shall be responsible for liaison with the Executive Committee on all matters relevant to the Working Group.
58. Each Working Group may appoint a rapporteur for a (renewable) period of three years. Where no rapporteur is appointed, the Secretariat of the North Western Waters AC shall be Secretariat to the Working Groups and shall perform all duties as outlined in the Rules and Procedures of the NWWAC.
59. The Secretariat shall organise meetings of the Working Groups at least once a year.
60. Working Group meetings shall not take place at the same time as the Executive Committee but shall meet consecutively in advance of Executive Committee meetings, where possible.
61. Working Group meetings shall be simultaneously conducted in French, Spanish and English where necessary.
62. Where a decision needs to be made by one of the NWWAC Working Groups outside of the WG meetings, the Secretariat shall initiate the written electronic procedure on behalf of the Chairperson of the relevant Working Group. A proposal for a decision shall be sent to the relevant group by email, and the group shall be asked to respond with all views or comments before a specified deadline. A period to reply will be established as agreed with the relevant group's Chairperson.

Ad Hoc Groups

63. The Executive Committee may decide to establish Ad Hoc Groups (such as Focus Groups and Advice Drafting Groups) to assist the Working Groups in preparing recommendations and suggestions. Ad Hoc Groups may be appointed for a specific purpose for a limited duration or may have a permanent character.
64. Ad Hoc Groups shall prepare draft advice on the specific topic for which they have been created and accordingly prepare the approved work of the relevant Working Group.



65. Participation is open to all working group members upon expression of interest. The Working Group nominates the Ad Hoc Group members, taking into account that focus and/or drafting requires a restricted number of participants in the Group.
66. Ad Hoc Groups must have at least 5 members but not more than 12 to ensure efficient and effective advice drafting.
67. Members of the NWWAC that nominate members to an Ad Hoc Group, should ensure that there is appropriate continuity of membership for the duration of the Ad Hoc Group.
68. Members of the Ad Hoc Groups shall nominate and appoint a Chairperson, Rapporteur and at least one Vice-Chairperson for the group from the group attendees.
69. The Chairperson shall be selected, by consensus or by a vote as appropriate, from amongst the members of the Ad Hoc Group for the duration of same as approved by the Executive Committee.
70. Terms of Reference for Ad Hoc Groups shall be drafted by the scoping meeting of the group upon input by the relevant Working Group and approved by the Executive Committee.
71. Should any NWWAC member wish to join an already established Ad Hoc group for the duration of the work of the respective group, they must contact the Secretariat which will notify the Chairperson of the relevant group for decision making.
72. Where a decision needs to be made by an Ad Hoc Group outside of a group meeting, the Secretariat shall initiate the electronic procedure on behalf of the Chairperson of the relevant group. A proposal for a decision shall be sent to the relevant group by email, and the group shall be asked to respond with dissenting views or comments before a specified deadline. A period of reply will be established as agreed with the relevant group's Chairperson.
73. The Secretariat shall organise meetings of Ad Hoc Groups as requested by said groups' members.
74. Meetings of the Ad Hoc Groups are open to active members of the respective group only. NWWAC members who wish to be informed about the work of an Ad Hoc Group may contact any member of the respective group.
75. Ad Hoc Group meetings will not take place at the same time as the Executive Committee or Working Groups meetings but will meet when necessary and agreed by the group's members.
76. Ad Hoc Groups shall automatically dissolve once their task as described in the Terms of Reference is completed.
77. This shall not preclude the Ad hoc Group to request from the relevant Working Group an application to the Executive Committee for the extension of the duration of the relevant Ad Hoc



Group based on the relevant work programme and/or an approved amendment of the Terms of References.

Observers

78. The meetings of the General Assembly shall be open to the public. The meetings of the Executive Committee shall be open to the public unless, in exceptional cases, decided otherwise by a majority of the Executive Committee in line with (EU) 1380/2013 Annex III Art. 2(g).
79. Representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament and other European agencies, bodies or organisations shall be able to attend any meeting of the AC as active observers ((EU) 1380/2013 Annex III, Art. 2(j)).
80. Representatives of national and regional administrations that have fisheries interests in the area concerned and researchers from the Member States' scientific and fisheries research institutes and from the international scientific institutions that advise the Commission shall be allowed to participate in Advisory Council meetings as active observers. Any other qualified scientist may also be invited.
81. Additional representatives of member organisations of a Working Group shall be permitted to attend this Working Group's meetings of the AC as active observers.
82. In accordance with (EU)1380/2013 Annex 3 Art. 2 (k), when issues that affect them are discussed, representatives of the fisheries sector and other interest groups from third countries, including representatives from RFMOs, that have a fishing interest in the area covered by NWWAC, may be invited to participate as active observers.
83. Unless specifically invited, all observers must register their attendance 48 hours prior to that meeting at the latest.
84. The NWWAC shall not be responsible for reimbursing the costs of attendance of observers. Observers shall have the right to speak at the discretion of the Chairperson and shall not be entitled to vote.

Experts

85. At the discretion of the Chairperson, and where the budget allows, the NWWAC may invite to its meetings scientists and/or technical experts from national and regional institutes or international bodies and other qualified scientists, academics or economists to assist in the work of the AC. Experts shall not be entitled to vote.



NWWAC Management Team

86. The NWWAC Management Team consists of:

- a. Chairperson of the Executive Committee
- b. Three Vice-Chairs of the Executive Committee
- c. Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary of the NWWAC

87. The NWWAC Management Team deals with administrative, management and operational matters, including but not limited to:

- a. Discussing the ongoing work regarding agreed action points from Working Groups
- b. Preparing drafts for work programmes and budgets,
- c. Discussing venues and agenda points for upcoming NWWAC meeting
- d. Addressing invitations to external meetings, projects and consultations etc.

88. The Management Team shall meet once per month.

89. The Secretariat shall circulate a draft agenda prior to each meeting as well as minutes following the meeting. A summary report shall be published in the Members Area on the NWWAC website.

Delegation of Power and Members' Responsibilities

90. Powers shall be delegated to the Chairperson of the AC, and on occasion initially to the Vice-Chairs and subsequently to other members of the Executive Committee or the Secretariat, to take part in external meetings. In attending external meetings, the NWWAC representative shall solely express the opinions of the AC on the items on the agenda and shall not express personal views. Full reports on such meetings shall subsequently be provided by the representative to the Secretariat for relevant publication.

91. Members of the NWWAC shall not claim to represent the views of the NWWAC itself, or the views of other Members. Comments and papers expressing the views of the NWWAC shall only be issued by the Secretariat, under the authority and with agreement of the Executive Committee.

Secretariat

92. The Secretariat shall act independently and without bias in furthering the objectives of the NWWAC. The Secretariat shall be a properly constituted body as identified in the NWWAC Statutes.



93. The Secretariat, guided by the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, shall consolidate the principles for the operation of the NWWAC.
94. The Secretariat shall keep the accounts of the NWWAC and prepare the reporting to the Annual General Assembly. The Secretariat shall also arrange for the auditing of the accounts and for satisfying any reporting conditions laid down by fund providers. The Secretariat shall liaise with potential and actual fund providers to achieve funding of the NWWAC.
95. The Secretariat shall arrange meetings of the General Assembly, Executive Committee, Working Groups and Ad Hoc Groups, and organise reimbursements as foreseen under the AC principle.
96. The Secretariat shall ensure that draft reports of each meeting of the AC are agreed upon and that agreed reports are placed on the NWWAC's website within two months of the meeting taking place. In case no agreement on a draft report can be reached by correspondence, formal adoption of the report shall take place at the forthcoming meeting.
97. As part of an active communications programme, the Secretariat shall maintain a web site, produce draft press releases if required and provide full and timely reports on the NWWAC activities.
98. The Secretariat shall aim to rotate the location of meetings (when budget and logistics allow) in order to enable as many stakeholders as possible to participate and assume ownership of the process.
99. The Secretariat shall make recommendations adopted by the Executive Committee available by posting them on the website.
100. To further the objectives of the NWWAC, the Secretariat shall maintain a register of member organisations, including their EU transparency registration numbers, and may, with the approval of the Executive Committee and taking in to account the budget:
 - a. employ and pay any person/s to supervise, organize and carry out the work of the NWWAC;
 - b. engage and pay fees to professional and technical advisors or consultants to assist in the work of the NWWAC;
 - c. bring together in conference and work in liaison with representatives of other organisations, government departments, the European Commission, and other statutory authorities and individuals;
 - d. ensure that properly qualified experts attend the meetings of such organisations as are considered to be in the interests of and compatible with the objectives of the NWWAC;



- e. promote and support the carrying out of research, surveys and investigations and where appropriate publish or disseminate the results;
- f. arrange and provide for, or join in arranging and providing for, the holding of exhibitions, seminars and meetings;
- g. cause to be prepared and printed or otherwise reproduced and circulated, free of charge or for payment, such papers, books, periodicals, pamphlets or other documents, films, recorded tapes or other electronic media as shall further the objectives of the NWWAC;
- h. purchase, take on lease, hire, or otherwise acquire any equipment or apparatus considered appropriate for the work of the NWWAC;
- i. seek funds to pursue the objectives of the NWWAC;
- j. do all other such lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objectives of the NWWAC.

ADVICE DRAFTING PROCEDURE

101. In addition to requests for advice from the European Commission and/or the North Western Waters Member States group, members of the NWWAC can propose a topic for consideration through the most appropriate Working Group.
102. The NWWAC will strive to reach consensus in all drafts.
103. To draft advice on a specific topic an Ad Hoc Group may be set up in accordance with Article 63.
104. After a meeting a draft advice is distributed to the participants for finalisation via electronic procedure. If new topics are added that were not discussed at the meeting, these must be agreed by all members of the respective group and an additional meeting may be held if needed.
105. Participants are invited to send their comments by a given deadline as agreed with the members of the relevant group. These comments have to be presented as alternative text with changes tracked as appropriate. If a comment simply states that the participant does not like a section, without providing alternative text, the text will not be changed.
106. In cases where significant change is proposed, time permitting, a follow-up web or tele-meeting may be organised with the main contributors, following which a further draft may be issued.
107. Once a draft is agreed within the relevant Ad Hoc Group, it is next sent to the relevant Working Group for written comment within 7 natural days. Comments received after the deadline will not be accepted.
108. In cases where significant change is proposed, time permitting, a follow-up web or tele-meeting may be organised with the main contributors, following which a further draft is issued to the relevant Working Group for comment. The deadline for comments on a reissued draft is 48 hours.



109. The Secretariat will draft an NWWAC opinion trying to accommodate all points of view. In case no consensus can be found, minority opinions must be recorded. If a minority opinion is supported by one organisation, it will be recorded as a foot note. If it is supported by more than one organisation, it will be added on the text of the advice. If the minority opinion requests further explanation, it can be added as an annex no longer than one page.
110. Once a draft has been approved by the relevant Working Group, it will be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval. For an orderly and speedy process within the Executive Committee, it is recommended that only Executive Committee members that are not represented in the relevant Working Group may comment within 7 natural days on the draft using track changes. If Executive Committee members wish to propose text edits, they should be minimal. Executive Committee members must submit their request early in the process and should not leave it until the deadline to provide enough time for further negotiation and discussion with other parties. Comments received after the deadline will not be accepted.
111. Unless otherwise indicated via written procedure, Executive Committee members will receive where needed an updated draft version of the advice for final approval. The deadline for approval of re-issued drafts is 48 hours. Finally, the Executive Committee has to approve or reject the advice.
112. NWWAC advice will be based, where available, on reliable technical and scientific information.
113. If the NWWAC is required to meet tight timelines, the Secretariat can launch a fast-track procedure at the request of the management team. The Secretariat informs the members and prepares a draft advice on the urgent topic. Members of AC shall have a minimum of 3 working days to provide input for the draft. Subsequently the draft advice is presented to the Executive Committee and the members of the Executive Committee shall have a minimum of 2 working days to approve or reject the draft. If rejected the party requesting advice shall be informed about the AC's impossibility to accommodate.

AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

114. These Rules of Procedure shall be agreed by the NWWAC General Assembly. Any amendments to these Rules of Procedure must be presented to members for comment at the Annual General Assembly and agreed by a two-thirds majority of members of the Executive Committee.



Annex 1 - NWWAC structure

