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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Directorate C: Fisheries Policy Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic and Outermost Regions Unit C3: Scientific Advice and Data Collection

Call MARE/2020/08 - SECWEB - SI2.839854

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 (SECWEB)

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

Final Report

Progress Report Number: Final report

Covered period: from 1st January 2022 to 28th February 2023 Project duration: from 1st January 2021 to 28th February 2023

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Beneficiary: Coordinator - Eigen Vermogen van het Instituut voor Landbouw - en

visserijonderzoek, EV ILVO

Project coordinator name and title: Mrs. Els Torreele

Tel.: +32 472 31 24 88

E-mail: els.torreele@ilvo.vlaanderen.be

DECLARATION BY THE PROJECT COORDINATOR¹

I, Els Torreele, coordinator of the "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 (SECWEB)", hereby confirm that:

\boxtimes	This final	report	represents	an	accurate	description	of the	work	carried	out	in	this
	project;											

\boxtimes The project:

- (x) has fully achieved its objectives and technical goals;
- () has achieved most of its objectives and technical goals with relatively minor deviations;
- () has failed to achieve critical objectives.
- To the best of my knowledge, the financial statements submitted as part of this report are in line with the actual work carried out and are consistent with the report on the resources used for the project and if applicable with the certificate on financial statement.

Date and Signature

¹ By "project coordinator" shall be understood the person responsible for the work to be performed under this grant. If different from the person who signed the Grant Agreement representing "the beneficiary" (or "the coordinator" in case of multiple beneficiaries), a formal letter must accompany this report, in which the latter authorises the project coordinator to report on behalf of the beneficiary or beneficiaries.

1. FINAL PUBLISHABLE SUMMARY REPORT

This is a comprehensive summary overview of results, conclusions and impacts of the project. The publishable report shall be formatted to be printed as a stand-alone document. This report should address a wide audience, including the general public. Please ensure that it:

- Fits in the space provided in this page;
- Is of suitable quality to enable direct publication by the European Commission;
- Is comprehensive, and describes the work carried out to achieve the project's objectives, its main results and conclusions. Please mention the target groups (such as policy makers or sectors of the civil society) for whom the project results could be relevant.

The SECWEB project, setting up support mechanisms for 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 for all the RCGs (NANSEA, Baltic, Large Pelagics, Long Distance Fisheries, Med and Black Sea and Economics issues (former PGECON)), operated from January 2021 to February 2023.

The project built upon the RCGs work and previous projects: fishPi2, STREAM and SECFISH that provided tools to enhance the regional coordination. It brought together 5 institutes from 4 Member States and involved various experts, often active RCG members and partners in the previous projects. The project aimed at (1) developing the framework for an RCG secretariat, (2) promoting good communication practices within and among the RCGs, (3) developing an RCG website and increasing the visibility of the RCGs' work and output, and (4) describing the funding structures to put in place for the continued operation of administrative and communication support to RCGs, and the permanent update of the content of the website.

SECWEB met regularly with RCGs NANSEA and Baltic chairs to prepare for the annual cycle of technical meetings and the decision meeting. For these two RCGs SECWEB provided support for annual technical meetings organization (registration system, meeting platform, agendas, etc.) and reporting, including the intersessional subgroup (ISSG) progress monitoring. It supported other RCGs through different means: setting up a dedicated RCG Sharepoint (in CETMAR virtual environment) for the RCG chairs; developing templates, reports and additional documents, issuing certificates for training courses, etc. On demand, it provided organizational support for workshops (RCG ECON & RCG Med&BS), steering committees (RCG Med&BS), annual technical meetings of RCG ECON, RCG LDF & RCG LP and Liaison meeting (LM). All this has allowed the SECWEB to explore the work at the dimension of the RCGs network and test an RCG secretariat as a pilot.

The RCGs' pilot Secretariat developed a communication protocol focusing on internal communication flows. It also interacted with end users, like the ICES Secretariat, to improve the communication flows and the monitoring of RCGs' recommendations. It channelled contents for the website and newsletter, and consultation processes with the national correspondents. The pilot secretariat within SECWEB organized internal communication and coordination with other MARE/2020/08 grant projects: Fishn'Co, Streamline, and RDBFIS. With Fishn'Co the collaboration was particularly intense as there was a commitment by this project to fully align the communication efforts with SECWEB.

SECWEB developed and launched a dedicated RCG website: https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/ containing also a stakeholder database and other resources including information about present and past RCGs projects. SECWEB created an RCG Twitter account (@fisheriesRCG) where recent activities can be followed: https://twitter.com/fisheriesRCG. Other communication and dissemination products include YouTube videos (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oeZvqjOB6Y), banners, and an electronic newsletter.

The most challenging task was the development of a long-term scenario to establish, beyond the end of the project, the permanent implementation of an RCG secretariat, the website (maintenance), and having the documents and communication up to date. Based on several consultations with the national correspondents, the RCGs chairs and experts, and DG MARE, seven scenarios were developed to provide financial support for the 'beyond the project' implementation of the SECWEB results.

All scenarios take into account all RCGs in the long-term support: (1) Flat rate scenario; (2) Flat rate scenario with lower annual contribution by the land-locked countries; (3) Scenario based on annual contribution by MS according to the total 2021-2027 EMFAF budget; (4) Scenario based on the number of RCGs MS participate in; (5) A three-component scenario: EC contribution, % of EMFAF, MS participation in RCGs; (6) A two-component scenario: not presented to the NC; calculated without the EC contribution from scenario 5; (7) Ensuring the finance of the RCG secretariat by EC contribution only.

A crucial outcome of the consultations was that all MS agree to have secretariat and services and see this as a significant added value for the work of the RCGs. The final long-term implementation scenario could not be identified within the time of the project. To continue the work during 2023, a transition solution was implemented, with a one-year contract between the pilot-secretariat partner in the project, and each individual MS. To establish the long term framework, the project recommended (1) to work with a pan-regional ISSG NC: to explore further which scenario is feasible for all MS within their legal frameworks; and (2) the RCG NANSEA & RCG Baltic to call on the ISSG NC to have a meeting before or during the TM with participation of other NCs not involved in the RCG NANSEA & Baltic.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES FOR THE PERIOD

Please provide an overview of the project objectives, as included in Annex I of the Grant Agreement. If applicable, please refer to any recommendations or guidance received from the European Commission in previous reports or meetings, and indicate how these have been taken into account (Max.1 page)

The overall objective of SECWEB project was to develop mechanisms to support the planning and execution of administrative tasks and the branding and online visibility of the Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs). The strategic objectives for the reporting period are the following:

- To develop and set up the framework for a secretariat for RCGs by providing administrative support to RCGs chairs. As a case study, a secretariat will be set up to learn how a permanent support structure can facilitate the coordination of administrative tasks and guarantee that RGCs and the member states are fully aware and able to comply with these procedures in an efficient manner. The pilot RCG Secretariat provided support not only to RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic chairs as originally planned; but also, to RCG LP, RCG LDF, RCG Med&BS, RCG ECON and Liaison Meeting chairs.
- To apply the experience of the case study to the RCGs in 2021 and to disseminate the RCG work and its outcomes, to promote visibility, knowledge transfer and fluent communication. First, among the different RCGs and second, with all the relevant stakeholders: the European Commission (EC), the Member States (MS), RFMOs, the scientific bodies involved in the fisheries assessments, the Fisheries Advisory Councils, the fisheries research community, NGOs and the general public. The application of the case study and its dissemination run from 2021 to the end of the project in February 2023.
- To develop and set up a website to support the visibility of the RCG work, among the RCGs, and to a variety of end users. DG MARE recommended to plan for the viability of the webpage beyond the lifetime of the project. To keep web domain active as well as the web hosting. AZTI, responsible for hosting the webpage during the SECWEB life span, in collaboration with CETMAR accomplished the migration of the website to CETMAR servers before the end of the project. CETMAR will get in charge of the web maintenance at least during 2023.
- To develop, distribute and apply a Visual identity for RCGs to all documents and communication tools. The RCG's visual identity has been established and used successfully by all RCGs over the project implementation.
- To set up and keep updated a Stakeholders database. As recommended by the Commission the database gives the option to stakeholders to hide their profile in case stakeholders do not want their information to be displayed publicly.
- To develop and apply an internal communication protocol. The internal communication protocol has been updated periodically, as the RCG Secretariat was developing along the project implementation.
- Integration of the results of other MARE/2020/08 projects into the website development. The integration of the stakeholder database has been highlighted. The output "Levels of ambition" from Fishn'Co project has also been integrated to the website https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/level-of-ambitions/. Besides, a repository area for bi-lateral and multilateral agreements has also been set up as an identified need by Fishn'Co, so that there is a common source of information for all MS when referring to the different agreements in the context of the RWPs.
- Define a financial scenario acceptable for all MS in the different regions and the Commission to ensure the long-term existence of a secretariat and the RCG website. During the second year of SECWEB implementation, several meetings were held with DG MARE unit C3 staff in this regard. The project run several consultations with MS about the workable mechanism for funding the Secretariat on the long term. From MS' feedback it was clear that diverse legal barriers apply, there was a general concern with the contracting procedure and who should/would be responsible for it. A new business model was developed considering weighting factors instead of a flat rate scenario. In May 2022, the project explored the possibility of establishing a legal entity for the Secretariat in a MS. A range of structures and funding mechanisms have been explored within the project; these are fully described in deliverable 3.

3. WORK PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE PERIOD

Please provide a concise overview of the progress of the work in line with the structure of Annex I of the Grant

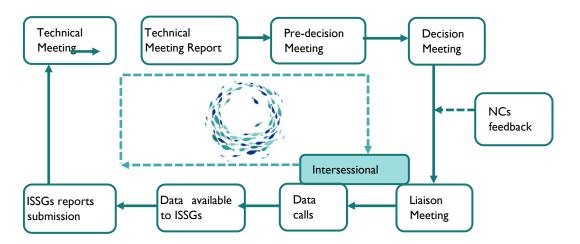
Agreement. Deliverables and dissemination activities can be mentioned, but should be described in detail in section 4. Similarly, details related to the management of the project shall be further reported in section 5 (Max. 5 pages)

- A summary of progress explicitly compared to the objectives specified in section 2 above providing, if applicable, details for each task as detailed in the agreed work plan of your proposal (Annex I of the Grant Agreement);
- Highlight clearly significant results and outputs;
- If applicable, explain the reasons for deviations from Annex I, and explain the impact on other objectives/tasks as well as on available resources and planning;
- If applicable, explain the remedial actions that have been applied.

WP 1: Setting up the secretariat in support to RCGs and ISSGs, including coordination and management of the project.

<u>Task 1: To develop and setup the framework for an RCG secretariat in support of fluent administrative procedures</u> and establish a long-term script. To set up a SECWEB project secretariat

From the start of the project, a pilot RCG Secretariat was setup with CETMAR as the main partner in charge. The tasks of the RCG Secretariat were defined in coordination with the respective RCG chairs. During the project, the Secretariat supported RCG chairs, in particular RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic (though not exclusively), in their task to accomplish the annual RCG workflow shown in the figure below:



The experience built through supporting RCGs meetings and Liaison Meeting in 2021 and 2022, together with additional requests received from all RCGs during the project, were integrated in the setup of the Secretariat activities. Based on all the interactions with the different RCGs and DG MARE, the task flows and settings for a Secretariat were identified, see annex 2 for detailed list of tasks.

Summary of relevant tasks carried out in support of the RCGs in this reporting period:

- Provision of support in organizing and planning the annual technical meetings by the RCGs, the predecision and decision meetings as well as support for the ISSG meetings (e.g. the ISSG End-users of the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic).
- Support during and after the meetings. The pilot secretariat assigned staff to attend the meetings to take minutes in support of the reporting processes. The Secretariat assisted the RCG chairs to ensure the timeliness of the contributions for the reports. Integration of contributions, editing and formatting of the several reports was done by the Secretariat.
- Setup of a consistent branding and permanent support to communication on behalf of the RCGs such as sending invitations to participants prior to the meetings, call for intersessional work (e.g. questionnaires), communication with stakeholders with regard to the specific questions of the RCGs; Communication and dissemination on the RCGs structures and achievements through the website and on-line media.
- Support for the maintenance of working tools, e.g. setting up of MS TEAMs folders and GoogleDrive coeditable documents when needed; setting up the meeting virtual venue with suitable tools; setting up an

online repository for bi- and multilateral agreements; setting up of a shared on-line calendar; support for the participants with their access to meetings and meeting documents, etc.

Support for specific topics/demands by the RCGs, e.g finding new participants for ISSGs

Task 1.1. Support for the organization of meetings for the project and RCGs.

Under task 1.1 of the Project an organized list of steps in the processes was carried out as part of the Secretariat pilot. This was proposed as a task to be taken up by the Secretariat under the project. All elements listed in the proposal were taken up and followed up by the Secretariat running under CETMAR and the insights about the tasks and service needs arising from the pilot experience fed into the design of the long-term approach for the Secretariat by SecWeb WP3.

As a significant output of the project, we need to highlight that the RCGs' Secretariat scope at the moment is broader than that originally planned. Support was not only provided to RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic as a case study, but also to other RCGs annual technical meetings, intersessional workshops, and steering committees. This was also the case for the Liaison Meetings (2021, 2022); the Secretariat attended the meetings, took minutes, supported the reporting, and co-edited the final version of the LM report in cooperation with the chair.

Additionally, support was given to the organization of the project meetings of another MARE/2020/08 grant project – Fishn´Co, on the request of Fishn´Co.

Task 1.2. Support the RCGs chairs to report from meeting(s)

The list of elements included in the project description under task 1.2 have been taken up and followed up by the Secretariat running under CETMAR. Different templates (RCG meeting minutes, annual technical report, decision meeting report, ppts, etc) were developed and shared to aid a standardized reporting for meetings. Logos for all RCGs have also been designed and incorporated into templates.

Task 1.3. Support the RCG **chairs** to organise and monitor ISSG **work progress against** agreements, milestones and a set of *ad hoc* indicators. Provide **administrative support for the preparation of progress reports and deliverables:**

Under task 1.3 of the Project description, a list of actions was proposed for the Secretariat to support the ISSG working under the RCGs. All elements listed in the proposal have been taken up and followed up by the secretariat running under CETMAR.

After two RCG cycles, lots of lessons have been learned in understanding the dynamics of the different RCGs and how these differences affect the kind and level of support needed. After the technical meeting of RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic in 2021, the Secretariat analysed different support activities, based on requests and needs identified before, during and after the meeting. This analysis was evaluated in coordination with the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic chairs and presented to the SECWEB partners. The analysis of lessons learned to improve the support was again conducted after the whole cycle of technical meetings in 2021, and again after the 2022 meetings. The outcome is a map of tasks comprised in the secretariat service in support of the whole RCG network, a comprehensive list of processes and procedures. In a similar way, CETMAR shared the service description with all project partners and RCG chairs. Then, the effort needed for each activity to assist all the RCGs was estimated. This information was also used to feed the business model design for the long-term run of the Secretariat.

Task 1.4. Administrative secretariat

The administrative secretariat carried out the specific activities listed in the project description with no deviations.

Task 2: Good practices for internal communication among the RCGs and for the Project

The internal communication protocol was developed after the experience gained from running the pilot Secretariat in 2021. The protocol identified targeted audiences, described the internal communication flow, and described the different communication channels and tools according to the different needs for an effective communication strategy.

WP2: Developing and operating a website

The website for the RCGs has been test-run. It has been developed and improved with the feedback received from various users https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/. The main characteristics developed in the web during this period are described below, in relation to the tasks of the project.

Task 1: To develop the needs and expectations of the RCGs at the one hand and the end-users on the other hand about a website.

- RCGs were consulted during their annual meeting. Their feedback was received and incorporated into the
 website. One of the outcomes of this consultation has been a new section developed for Intersessional
 subgroups (ISSG): https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/intersessional-subgroups/. The structure of content of
 this section was agreed with the RCGs.
- 2. Project participants and other potential users of the website were also consulted, and their feedback incorporated.
- Overall, the website remains friendly and easy to navigate with all RCG information structured for easy access.
- 4. Advantages and disadvantages of a private repository have been discussed and evaluated. Finally, it was decided not to develop a new document repository on the website. RCGs' SharePoints (hosted by ICES) and ftp (hosted by JRC) are functioning well as they are now, and the needs of the groups are fully covered. The incorporation of a new repository into the website would imply an increase of its complexity and extra workload to maintain updated content and to manage permissions. In addition, cost would increase. To facilitate the connection between the website and the different SharePoints, a link to each RCG SharePoint is provided in the section "useful links". A link is also provided to the JRC website.

Task 2: To develop a high-quality website by the end of 2021, with the aim to test and optimize during 2022 During 2022 the website has been tested and optimized.

- 1. The Yoast SEO plugin has been installed to improve positioning in search engines such as Google and to attract more traffic to the website.
- A number of news have been published in the web and distributed through an electronic newsletter. The
 news included information/announcement of various meetings taking place, infographics, interviews,
 etc. In total, along the project, 24 press releases have been accomplished https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/news/
- 3. A new section in the RCGs' site has been developed for Intersessional Subgroups (ISSG): https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/intersessional-subgroups/. The content of this section was agreed with the RCGs and the link to ISSG SharePoint was included (access for ISSG members)
- 4. A repository for bilateral and multilateral agreements has been developed in Power Bi to show and make easily available the agreements in place among different Countries, a small description, and the respective reference document: https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/repository/
- 5. The products of the RCGs are presented in "toolbox" and "achievements" sections of the RCG website. In addition, a Fishn' Co product has been published, an infographic on the levels of ambition in the data collection coordination around main thematic areas.
- 6. The website statistics show that more than 9000 web items in the site have been visited and each user visits more than two pages on average per session and spends almost two and a half minutes per session.
- 7. A document with maintenance instructions have been produced with guidelines and useful links, for the new website hosts (CETMAR) to be able to maintain it updated.

Task 3: Promote good practices in communication among the RCGs and engaging with all stakeholders and the general public.

The website has been tested as a tool to establish a bidirectional communication with our target audience. News have been published in the web and distributed through the e-newsletter. The Secretariat has been contacted through the email provided on the website (secretariat@fisheries-rcg.eu) and has become the reference contact point for all RCGs related issues.

The newsletter has been distributed to 126 subscribers.

A database with stakeholder information has been developed to improve and facilitate the communication within the network and with end-users. It has also been embedded in the RCGs web. No deviations have occurred during the reporting period.

WP3 Ensuring future operation and funding

Task 1: Analysis of the findings from WP1 & WP2

To explore the background for business scenarios, SECWEB analysed the fishPi2 project outcomes (MARE/2016/22) and RCGs (NANSEA and Baltic) reports. The experience gained during meetings at the beginning of the project, and the insights from WP1 & WP2 gathered during the first year were also very valuable, and enabled WP3 team to have realistic and up-to-date estimations of the workload needed for the Secretariat services including the maintenance of the website and supporting structures. All details are presented in Deliverable D.3.1.

Task 2: Business models and scenarios for implementation, ensuring long-term funding involving member states and all other stakeholders in this process

Based on the analysed work, findings, discussions and consultations with the stakeholders, as well as significant work done by the WP3 team and all relevant experts involved, seven draft business/financing scenarios estimations were developed (Deliverable D.3.1).

The proposed scenarios are:

Scenario 1 - Flat rate scenario;

Scenario 2 - Flat rate scenario with lower annual contribution by the LLC (land-locked countries);

Scenario 3 – Rates are according to the annual contribution by MS according to the total EMFAF budget for the period 2021-2027;

Scenario 4 – Rates are according to the number of RCGs in which each MS is participating;

Scenario 5 – A 3-component scenario, which was presented to the NCs and was discussed during the NCs meeting in September 2022;

Scenario 6 – A 2-component scenario, which was not presented to the NCs and was calculated because the EC participation in scenario 5 is not confirmed;

Scenario 7 – With the funding of the RCGs secretariat depending on the EC contribution only (which was disregarded).

Additionally, as initial step for ensuring the future operating of the Secretariat, WP3 elaborated a proposal for draft text for Text Box 1b: Other data collection activities for the MSs' Work Plans for data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors for the period 2022-2024 which was circulated to NCs for the inclusion into the NWPs. The text (available in Deliverable 3.3) was fine tuned for the 2023-2025 period and again provided to the NCs to be incorporated into their NWPs.

Task 3: Integration of findings into a long-term strategy and a short-term operational plan for the RCGs' support structure (for 3 years beyond the SECWEB)

The business scenarios, which were presented to RCGs, the NCs, and the EU COM, were completed by additional information provided after the completion of WP1& WP2.

The partner carrying out the RCG Secretariat pilot, together with the other experts from the project, have prepared a detailed list of the activities, which have been carried out during the SECWEB project and should continue after 28th February 2023. The document is foreseen as a live document to be amended according to the feedback received from NCs and the Commission.

For the consultation process, a questionnaire to the NCs was prepared to understand the position of each MS for the most suitable business scenario and their possibilities for establishing the national contributions. In December 2021 the questionnaire to the NCs - *Questionnaire to the NCs for the funding of the RCGs Secretariat* was finalized and distributed together with the relevant documentation.

A short-term operational plan for the RCG's support structure was developed as an outcome of the consultation process with NCs. After the finalization of the consultation process and of the findings of WP2, the long-term strategy was developed. Both long-term strategy and a short-term operational plan are described in Deliverable 3.3.

No deviations occurred during the reporting period.

WP4. Communication and dissemination

The main objective of this set of activities was to integrate communication into the RCGs' strategy and to promote visibility and engagement towards their work. An overview of the progress of communication and dissemination activities is described below:

Task 1. Design of a detailed dissemination and communication plan (DCP) for the RCGs

The DCP identifies (Annex 32) the communication channels as well as key audience, communication products and timing of different activities/actions for an effective communication strategy. It is also a consultation document for the partnership and the RCGs. The document contains guidance about the use of logos, suitable templates, and other branding elements. It has been updated periodically to accommodate emerging needs such as new sections on the website, and meetings. It includes the Communication action planner.

Task 2. Combining efforts for the communication of the ISSGs work at EU and international level

WP4 worked closely with WP2 to deliver contents for different sections of the website. The contents were developed in close collaboration with the RCGs chairs, ISSGs chairs and the project leaders through this WP: e.g., narratives for the different sections and the **RCGs scope maps**.

The section dedicated to ISSGs https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/intesessional-subgroups/contains information on the role and remit of the ISSGs, an ISSG overview, chairs and relevant RCGs.

The **News section**, https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/news/ was developed promote the visibility of RCGs and ISSGs work, with three issues of the RCGs' Newsletter released during the project.

To enhance visibility of RCGs and ISSGs, the **EC DG Mare Communication Team** has committed to support increasing the RCG visibility through own stakeholders' networks (MARE newsletter https://ec.europa.eu/oceans-and-fisheries/news/data-collection-fisheries-goes-online-2021-10-29_en and social media).

The **Calendar** section, https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/calendar/, has been regularly updated with relevant meetings, training courses and workshops. Following recommendations from the RCGs network, the calendar has been upgraded to a more interactive and user-friendly version.

Likewise, a **Twitter** account has been created https://twitter.com/fisheriesRCG with the main goal to attract traffic to the RCG's website. The communication team posted regularly on Twitter following the communication strategy, since the account creation in March 2022.

A **YouTube channel** https://www.youtube.com/@fisheriesrcg was created in January 2023, as an important part of the future communication strategy for RCGs. In May 2022, the Secretariat started preparing a short explanatory video about what RCGs do and why a Secretariat service is a valuable service for the RCGs community. This video is available in the YouTube channel.

Establishing a visual identity: A Visual Identity Manual has been defined with clear guidelines on how to apply the graphic elements such as: RCGs and SECWEB logos, colours, and typography. The logos, colours and typography had been adjusted accordingly for the project Fishn'Co and used in all communication from the Fishn'Co project. Templates for official RCG documents have been created. Additional specific templates, such as: project minutes, RCG reports, ppts for Annual Technical Meeting and Liaison Meeting have also been created. The visual identity has been adopted successfully by RCGs during 2021 and 2022 and it has become an important branding element.

Task 3. Enhanced coordination of stakeholders' engagement (lead by ILVO)

Shared identification of relevant stakeholders: A **shared identification of stakeholders** was made in cooperation with the RCGs and ISSG chairs. The profile, role, interest of different stakeholders is key information for the design of the stakeholders' database.

The stakeholders' database is meant to be a basic tool for implementing the RCGs network communication strategy as well as for carrying out consultation processes and stakeholders' workshops. The database has been developed by ILVO and it is currently hosted at ILVO's serves. The integration of the database into the RCG website has also been accomplished. The partners AZTI, ILVO and CETMAR were perfectly coordinated in the successful execution of this task.

4. DELIVERABLES AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

Use this section to summarise all deliverables produced over the whole project duration (e.g. reports -other than the interim and final reports contractually required to be submitted to the European Commission-, websites, software etc.), as well as all dissemination activities executed (publications, workshops, conferences, etc.). For each of them, please signal if they were a contractual obligation², and provide the title, description and date of production, organisation or publication. If relevant, please provide proof on how the provisions of Article II.7 of the Grant Agreement (Visibility of Union Funding) were implemented (Max. 2 pages)

² Contractual obligation: this refers either to an activity/deliverable required in the Call for Proposals or provided for in Annex I.

WP1. Deliverables - contractual obligation

D.1.1: Six-monthly detailed meeting plans (CETMAR). At the beginning of the project and for most of 2021 project meetings were held on a fortnight basis. During 2022, as the project was running smoothly and the monitoring demands were less, the frequency of the meetings was reset to every three weeks.

D.1.2: Newsletters and infographics (CETMAR and ILVO).

1st Newsletter Issue (December 2021)

2nd Newsletter Issue (July 2022)

3rd Newsletter Issue (February 2023)

Infographic - Secretariat activities (Annex 1); Infographic – Secretariat task list (Annex 2)

D.1.4: Stakeholders database (ILVO). Stakeholder mapping was the first step (Annex 3), followed by draft outline of the needs and draft structure (Annex 4; Annex 5). Database was integrated into the website:

- Login page: https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/database/
- Stakeholders list: https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/stakeholders/

1st release in Feb 2023, to be populated with data in the coming months, and regularly updated afterwards.

A user manual has been developed (Annex 6), with a video tutorial (Annex 7) to facilitate the maintenance work beyond the SECWEB. D.1.4 is therefore achieved.

- D.1.5: Internal communication protocol (CETMAR). Final version, February 2023. (Annex 8). Achieved.
- **D.1.6:** Timeline with milestones for the Secretariat support during the year. It includes chronological actions to prepare RCG meetings, reporting, monitoring and organizing the ISSG work, etc. (Annex 9). Achieved.
- **D.1.7:** Templates for RCG meetings reports (CETMAR). Achieved. (Annex 10;). Power point presentation is available on the website https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/rcg-lp/ under Materials section for each RCG. Achieved.

WP1. Deliverables – additional

- RCG's Stakeholder database manual (Annex 7).
- RCG's Stakeholder database video tutorial (Annex 8).
- Template for Liaison meeting report (Annex 11).

WP1. Milestones

Due			Status
date	Num.	Name	Status
	Mulli.	Name	
(month)	M 1 1	TZ' 1 CC	A 1 ' 1
2021	M.1.1	Kick-off	Achieved.
Jan			
2021	M.1.2	Terms of reference for the participation of non-	Achieved
Feb		partners signed off	
2021	M.1.3	Contributions to the first progress report	Achieved
May			
2021	M.1.4	Agreement for harmonised stakeholder	Achieved. Two consultations conducted during
Dec		consultation among RCGs	2022 in relation to SECWEB; Jan 2022 Long-term
			funding of the RCGs Secretariat, and Sep 2022,
			Short-term funding. The answers overview is
			presented in Annex 28 and Annex 29,
			respectively. (See D.4.7)
2021	M.1.5	Accomplishment of the first interim stakeholders'	Achieved. 1st meeting with stakeholder ICES on
Dec		meeting	17 January 2022, a bit later than planned, due to
		_	Covid and the ICES availability
2022	M.1.6	Mid-term consultation process	Achieved. Two consultations conducted during
Mar		•	2022: Jan 2022 Long-term funding of the RCGs
			Secretariat, and Sep 2022, Short-term funding.
			Questionnaires available, Annex 12 and Annex 13,
			respectively.

WP2. Deliverables – contractual obligation

- **D.2.1:** A short description of the processes for developing the website. Achieved. (AZTI) A shared reflection was promoted to identify the needs of RCGs and end users in relation to the web (Annex 14).
- **D.2.2:** Final content of the website to be presented to RCGs and end users. Contents to the website continuously updated, new sections incorporated (ISSGs https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/intesessional-subgroups/, chairs https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/chairs/, repository area https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/chairs/, repository area https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/chairs/, repository area https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/repository/) (CETMAR). RCG website Design and maintenance manual was produced (AZTI). February 2023 (Annex 15).
- **D.2.3:** Register a domain name Choice of webhost. (AZTI) Finished. https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/

- **D.2.4:** Draft website to test, which should be done throughout a web design cycle. Optimize it for search engines. (AZTI) Finished. https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/
- **D.2.5:** Launch of the website. Achieved. The website of the RCGS was officially communicated as launched in October 2021. Achieved.

WP2. Milestones

Date	Num.	Milestone	Status
2021	M2.1	Description of the processes for developing the website. List of needs of RCGs and end users.	Achieved
Jun			
2021	M2.2	Draft version of the website and test by RCGs and end users.	Achieved
Oct			
2021	M2.3	Launch of the website	Achieved
Dec			
2022	M2.4	Updated version of the website	Achieved
Jun			
2022	M2.5	Document the design of the website, the technical features, the building blocks, the process	Achieved.
Oct		for update (and who) and demonstrate to the Commission at the final meeting.	February
			2023

WP3. Ensuring future operation and funding – contractual obligation

- All WP 3 deliverables were led by EAFA partners with support from ILVO. The WP3 is based on the analysis of the findings from WP1& WP2. To facilitate the reading, WP3 deliverables are compiled in a stand-alone document (Annex 19), describing the steps taken to develop the intermediate and long-term operational plan for the RCG's secretariat. Partial deliverables in Excel files are also available as annexes.
- **D.3.1:** Business models to present to the RCGs, the NCs and COM. Achieved. Several business scenarios were presented. December 2021 flat rate scenario with lower annual contribution by the LLC (Annex 16); August 2022 3 component scenario (Annex 17); October 2022 3 component scenario/EST participating in RCG LDF (Annex 18).
- **D.3.2:** Clear description of the level of service related to the costs ('return on investment') (see Annex 19)
- **D.3.3:** The development of long-term strategy and a short-term operational plan for the RCG's support structure (for 3 years beyond the SECWEB) (see Annex 19)

Milestones

Date	Num.	Milestone	Status	
2021	M.3.1	Listing of all scenarios presented in previous studies and	Achieved (Annex 20)	
May		reports, with the services linked		
2021	M.3.2	Business scenarios for the secretariat and website	Achieved. Three different business	
Dec		development under WP1&WP2	scenarios were developed	
2022	M.3.3	Overview of all business scenarios and services linked. Achieved		
Jun		Description of funding structures		
2022	M.3.4	Presentation to NCs and COM what business scenario to	Achieved. The scenario was presented at	
Nov		decide on to guarantee long term services of secretariat and	the RCG's Decision Meeting 2022.	
		website	Minutes and relevant documents	
			available (Annexes 21)	

WP4.Communication and dissemination - contractual obligation

- **D.4.1.** Contributions to Website contents. Achieved. Website contents have been developed with contributions from the RCG network, such as: narratives for MARE related projects, European Commission and the role of RCGs; scope maps for each RCGs; ISSGs section; and chairs bios. Other type of content like the News section and the calendar are updated on regular basis. https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/
- **D.4.2.** Visual identity for RCGs. Finished, July 2021 (Annex 22). A visual identity manual together with the graphic elements such as RCGs and Secretariat logos (Annexes 23) and report templates (Annexes 24) have been developed.
- **D.4.3.** Infographics. Achieved. A series of infographics have been done for each RCG (November 2021), showing RCG scope map, ToRs, ISSGs, NCs details of participating countries and other participating institutions (Annexes 25). They are also available on the website under each RCG section:

https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Infographic_RCGs-NANSEA.pdf

https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Infographic_RCGs-Baltic.pdf

https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Infographic_RCGs-MedBS.pdf

https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Infographic_RCGs-LP.pdf

https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Infographic_RCGs-LDF.pdf

https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Infographic_RCGs-ECON.pdf

- **D.4.4.** Leaflets. Achieved. Project leaflet produced and distributed among RCG network in May 2021. (Annex 26) **D.4.5.** Periodic newsletter. Achieved. The communication team liaised with RCGs' chairs and Mare grants' coordinators to feed the newsletter. Three issues released: in December 2021: 1st Issue RCG's newsletter, July 2022: 2nd Newsletter Issue, and February 2023: 3rd Newsletter Issue. Annexes 27.
- **D.4.6.** Reports from stakeholder events. Achieved. In 2021 significant contributions to reporting from RCGs NANSEA and Baltic Technical Meeting, and 18th Liaison Meeting. In 2022, support given to RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic reporting and 19th Liaison Meeting, to RCG LDF and RCG ECON reporting. Final editing and formatting support also offered to RCG LP and RCG Med&BS for 2022 annual reports, however the draft reports were not ready yet when writing this report. Reports from RCG's Technical Meetings and other relevant reports are available on the website under each RCG section in "*Latest reports*".
- **D.4.7.** Mid-term consultation process. Two consultations took place during 2022 in relation to SECWEB project; January 2022 Long-term funding of the RCGs Secretariat, and Sep 2022-Short-term funding. The overview of the answers is presented in Annex 28 and Annex 29, respectively. In addition, the RCG's Secretariat provided support to other consultation processes:
 - RCG ECON: Survey on economic data and methodology, started in January concluded in February 2022. Google form
 - FISHN'CO: NC Consultation Preparing for RWP, started in April concluded in June 2022. EU Survey platform

Both consultation processes were accomplished successfully.

WP4. Deliverables - additional

- X-banners, as a visibility material for RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic (Annexes 30)
- **Twitter** account has been created https://twitter.com/fisheriesRCG with regular posts on Twitter to promote and attract traffic to RCG's website
- YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/@fisheriesrcg where you can find Secweb promotional video (Annex 31) as well as Fishn'Co video. Secweb video was released 9th Feb 2023.

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Date	Num.	Milestone	Status
2021 Feb	M4.1	Kick-off meeting. DCP plan for RCGs	Done. DCP updated Feb 2023 (Annex 32)
2021 June	M4.2	First stakeholder event, presentation of	Done
		the visual identity, first newsletter	
2021 Dec	M4.3	Second stakeholder event, infographics	Achieved. Presented during 2022 at each RCG annual
		to present	technical meeting along with a presentation of
			SECWEB latest developments
2022 Jun	M4.4	Third stakeholder event	Achieved. Liaison meeting Sep 2022
2022 Nov	M4.5	Final event presenting all deliverables	Achieved. NC meeting March 2023.

5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Please use this section to summarise project management activities (Max. 2 pages)

- Describe briefly the main tools put in place to ensure sound project management (internal controls, monitoring tools, performance indicators, etc.). If applicable, describe performance of the tasks in terms of selected indicators.
- If applicable, please describe any problem encountered among the different beneficiaries or affiliated entities (distribution of tasks, coordination, communication, etc.).
- Report any other problems related to project management which have occurred and explain the remedial actions that have been applied as well as its results.
- Indicate changes which have occurred to the legal status of any of the beneficiaries or their affiliated entities, if any.

RCGs chairs through this account.

Below we summarise the management activities put into place during the project implementation for systematic progress monitoring and successful project development:

- 1. To maintain the project on track regular coordination meetings were held among SECWEB project partners: in the first year, on a fortnightly basis, to review project progress and agree on next actions to ensure alignment with expected results. During the second year, the coordination meetings were held every three weeks given that the project execution was running smoothly. All meetings were set with a known purpose and/or agenda and then the outcomes registered in minutes, circulated for feedback and validated according to the terms of the SECWEB Consortium Agreement.
- 2. Setting up shared information and document repositories (for technical, administrative, and financial documents) for partners to be able to access project documents in one spot. There are two separate repositories: SECWEB_TECH and SECWEB_ADMIN. SECWEB_TECH contains four folders corresponding to each WP and is used to share technical information related to project deliverables. SECWEB_ADMIN is used to share information related to contractual documents, consortium agreement, financial Id forms, progress report and financial report forms tailored for each partner among others. Besides, additional sharepoints on MS TEAMs were created as documents repository and a platform for collaborative work for the RCG network chairs and for the Liaison Meeting.
- 3. Establishing **effective communication** since the very beginning of the project implementation, with main channels through e-mail and regular meetings with project partners, and RCGs chairs who also participated as active members in fortnight meetings.

 Communication with EC project officers: technical project officer was invited and participated in coordination meetings; the communication with the administrative officer is normally done through email. For communication with other relevant stakeholders, mainly the NCs and the whole RCGs network, a specific email account was set up, secretariat@fisheries-rcg.eu, directly managed by the Secretariat and used to communicate about consultation processes and to provide relevant information about RCGs work. This is a two-way communication channel, and the Secretariat has also received requests of support from
 - SECWEB project received a slot in the agenda of RCGs' annual Technical Meetings in 2021 and 2022. The project objectives and expected results were presented to the RCGs network in their plenary sessions in 2021; progress and updates were presented in plenary sessions in 2022. In addition, the long-term funding strategy for the RCGs Secretariat was presented at NCs meeting in September 2022 for their endorsement. The final outcomes of SECWEB project were presented at the NCs meeting in March 2023.
- 4. Developing **templates for minutes, reports and presentations**. Templates were developed according to the EC guidance, and all include the official project logo and European Commission logo.
- 5. Organising, conducting and reporting meetings. Several tools are used on regular basis to coordinate meetings, such as: Doodle polls to for meetings arrangement, Teams and Zoom as meeting platforms, and a series of invitation, reminder and follow-up emails for the placeholder, draft agenda and minutes. Once the meeting is over, the coordination team uploads minutes on Teams and informs everyone that the minutes are available for comments, the repository is also used as a review tool. This combination of tools has proven very efficient to streamline meetings. Several hybrid meetings were held in 2022, where a registration system was used to foresee the needs in terms of room space, catering, etc. Hybrid meetings can be challenging, not only because is difficult to grasp the attention of both the people on the room and the people online but also to deal with connectivity issues. For this reason, during hybrid meetings there were at least two members of the Secretariat supporting the meetings, taking notes, and solving connectivity issues.
- 6. Promoting transparency. The coordination team regularly updated on the work packages status and on the project in general, both in WP and project meetings, which can be tracked in the minutes available in the dedicated repository (WP1- Secretariat + Coordination & Management). It has also been established a fluent dialog with the EC DG MARE officers, who took part in regular meetings. The dialogue between project partners with DG MARE team allowed for early detection of deviations or hurdles and taking pertinent actions to overcome them with due diligence and efficiency.
- 7. A Consortium Agreement was put into place for a successful project implementation. The CA was approved on 23 June 2021 (Annex 33).
- 8. In the reporting process, there has been a fluent communication with work package leaders and administrative staff to work collaboratively towards the report drafting and meeting the deadlines.

During the project implementation there were no remarkable problems in terms of project management, thanks to the effective communication and positive engagement of all stakeholders.

Since the elaboration of project proposal, the Planning Group on Economics Issues (PGECON) established as a subgroup of the Commission Expert Working Group on Data Collection according to Commission Decision (2016)3301 to assist the Commission in the implementation of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) has changed its status to inactive. In 2020, an RCG ECON dealing with data collection of economic data issues was established, to continue the PGECON work. This change has not had any significant implications in the project implementation since it had been anticipated and acknowledged from the very beginning.

6. SUBCONTRACTING

Describe whether any of the tasks has been subcontracted, provide justification, percentage of the volume subcontracted as compared to the total budget and explain how the subcontractor was selected. (Max. 2 pages)

None of the tasks were subcontracted. The costs for subcontracts reported are for small services. Some of them are for meeting logistics and some others for printings and video recording and edition services (by CETMAR)

7. BUDGET

- Please fill in the separate template for the Financial Report;
- In the section below, please provide your assessment of the budget implementation, as compared to the information included in Annex III of the Grant Agreement (Max. 2 pages)
 - Please explain any deviations from the planning, as well as their impact on the implementation of the project;
 - Signal any relevant problem concerning eligible costs, distribution of budget, financial constraints or others

OVERVIEW OF COSTS INCURRED 1st January 2021 то Total EC funding Total eligible request costs reported distrubution among partners 63.585,48 € 4.450,98€ 68.036,46 € ILVO 55.575.70€ CETMAR 61.787.93 € 3.354.85 € 1.920.68 € 3.808.66 € 75.833.17 € 64.455.66 € 4.961.05 €. AZTI 64.134,68 € 4.498,05€ 68.755,87€ 57.596,84 € 123,14 € EAFA 15.866,06 € 1.110,62€ 16.976,68 € 13.890,34€ WMR 9.500.00€ 115.15€ 673.06 € 10.288,21€ 1.633.46 € 193.152,00€ Total eligible 239.890,39€

Below the overview of the total cost incurred during the execution period, from 1st Jan 2021 to 28th Feb 2023, by each partner:

The main deviations are:

77.260,80 €

77.262.00 €

- a) In general, staff costs were higher than originally planned. The impossibility of having physical meetings hampered progress in most of the WP. In particular in WP3, extra time was needed to run consultations and find a satisfactory approach for the implementation of long-term strategy for the RCGs Secretariat.
- b) Travel costs were less than originally planned due to COVID restrictions and the difficulties travelling and therefore not been able to organize physical meetings.

In general terms, the deviation from the original budget is not significant given that it is 2% of the total budget. Particularly, if we take into account that all the tasks have been accomplished and all deliverables have been completed successfully.

The final financial request respects the maximum grant allowed according to the Grant Agreement and the distribution of the funding among partners is also in accordance with the individual maximum grant and proportional to the costs declared in each case.

There are no other relevant problems concerning eligible costs, distribution of budget, financial constraints to highlight.

8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please include any comment that you find relevant to convey to the European Commission. You may refer to issues such as policy implementation, contract management or budget execution (Max.1 page)

During the execution of the project, the COVID-19 regulations had an impact on the number of physical meetings. In June 2022 a physical meeting was possible (preceding to the RCG NANSEA&BALTIC June 2022). Due to this, the majority of travel budget was still available before the initial deadline of the project (31st December 2022). In agreement with FishnCo project, an extension for the project up to 28th February 2023 was applied for and granted. There was no additional budget requested, the budget not used for travel was reallocated to staff budget.

9. ATTACHMENTS

Please list all the attachments accompanying this report including the project deliverables, if any. Please number the annexes and use the same reference number in the below list of attachments..

- Annex 1- Infographic Secretariat activities (WP1, D1.2)
- Annex 2- Infographic Secretariat task list (WP1, D1.2)
- Annex 3- Stakeholder mapping (WP1, D1.4)
- Annex 4- Stakeholders database draft outline of the needs (WP1 D1.4)
- Annex 5- Stakeholders database draft structure (WP1, D1.4)
- Annex 6- Stakeholders database manual (WP1, D1 additional)
- Annex 7- Stakeholders database video tutorial (WP1, D1 additional))
- Annex 8- Internal communication protocol (WP1, D1.5)
- Annex 9- Timeline Secretariat support, milestones (WP1, D1.6)
- Annex 10- Overview Templates for RCGs meetings reports_other templates (WP1, D1.7)
- Annex 11- Template for Liaison meeting report (WP1, D1 additional)
- Annex 12- Consultation process Questionnaire: Long-term funding of the RCG's Secretariat (WP1, M1.6)
- Annex 13- Consultation process Questionnaire: Short-term funding of the RCG's Secretariat (WP1, M1.6)
- Annex 14- Developing Website Description RCG needs (WP2, D2.1)
- Annex 15- RCG Website Maintenance manual (WP2, D2.2)
- Annex 16- Business scenario funding flat rate lower annual contribution by LLC. December 2021 (WP3, D3.1)
- Annex 17- Business scenario funding 3 component scenario. August 2022 (WP3, D3.1)
- Annex 18- Business scenario funding 3 component scenario, recalculation including EST as member of RCG LDF. October 2022 (WP3, D3.1)
- Annex 19- Ensuring future operation and funding (WP3, D3.1, D3.2, D3.3)
- Annex 20- Listing of all scenario's presented in previous studies and reports, with the services linked (WP3, M3.1)
- Annex 21a- Presentation to NCs and COM what business scenario to decide on to guarantee long term services of secretariat and website (WP3, M3.4)
- Annex 21b- Secweb presentation, RCGs Decision Meeting 2022 (WP3, M3.4)
- Annex 21c- Minutes RCGs Decision Meeting 2022 (WP3, M3.4)
- Annex 22- RCGs Visual identity manual (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 23.1- Logo Secweb RCG's Secretariat (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 23.2- Logo RCG Baltic (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 23.3- Logo RCG NANSEA (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 23.4- Logo RCG ECON (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 23.5- Logo RCG LDF (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 23.6- Logo RCG LP (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 23.7- Logo RCG Med&BS (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.1a- Report template RCGs NANSEA & Baltic (WP4, D4.2)

- Annex 24.1b- Minutes template RCGs NANSEA & Baltic (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.1c- Presentation template RCGs NANSEA & Baltic (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.2a- Report template RCG ECON (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.2b- Minutest template RCG ECON (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.2c- Presentation template RCG ECON (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.3a- Report template RCG LDF (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.3b- Minutes template RCG LDF (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.3c- Presentation template RCG LDF (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.4a- Report template RCG LP (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.4b- Minutes template RCG LP (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.4c- Presentation template RCG LP (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.5a- Report template RCG Med &BS (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.5b- Minutes template RCG Med &BS (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 24.5c- Presentation template RCG Med &BS (WP4, D4.2)
- Annex 25.1- Infographic RCG Baltic (WP4, D4.3)
- Annex 25.2- Infographic RCG NANSEA (WP4, D4.3)
- Annex 25.3- Infographic RCG ECON (WP4, D4.3)
- Annex 25.4- Infographic RCG LDF (WP4, D4.3)
- Annex 25.5- Infographic RCG LP (WP4, D4.3)
- Annex 25.6- Infographic RCG Med&BS (WP4, D4.3)
- Annex 26- Project leaflet (WP4, D4.4)
- Annex 27.1- 1st Newsletter Issue (WP4, D4.5)
- Annex 27.2- 2nd Newsletter Issue (WP4, D4.5)
- Annex 27.3- 3rd Newsletter Issue (WP4, D4.5)
- Annex 28- Consultation process (September 2022) Long-term funding, Answer overview (WP4, D4.7)
- Annex 29- Consultation process (September 2022) Short-term funding, Answer overview (WP4, D4.7)
- Annex 30.1- X-banner RCG NANSEA (WP4, additional)
- Annex 30.2- X-banner RCG Baltic (WP4, additional)
- Annex 31 Secweb promotional video (WP4, additional)
- Annex 32- Dissemination and communication plan. Updated, February 2023 (WP4, M4.1)
- Annex 33- Consortium Agreement (WP1)