



RCG's Secretariat
SECWEB

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WP3 – Ensuring future operation and funding

Document	WP3 includes the following deliverables: Deliverable D.3.I – Business models to present to the RCGs, the NCs and COM Deliverable D.3.II – Clear description of the level of service related to the costs ('return on investment') Deliverable D.3.III – The development of long-term strategy and a short-term operational plan for the RCG's support structure (for 3 years beyond the SECWEB).		
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Section I – Introduction

The project SecWeb (MARE2020-08) was setup with the aim of developing mechanisms to support the planning and execution of administrative tasks and the branding and online visibility of the Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs), with the aim to establish a long-term supportive structure, the RCGs' Secretariat. The need for a coordination and administrative supporting structure for RCGs had already been identified by all RCGs in several previous projects, such as FishPi² and STREAM.

One of the expected outcomes of the project is to ensure future operation and funding scenarios learning from the pilot implementation experience and developing suitable business models for the long-term run of the Secretariat.

To avoid any disruption of the services, ideally the funding mechanism should be in place once the project ends, 28th February 2023. However, finding a viable approach for the long term stabilisation of the service will still need some further discussions and decisions in the context of the RCGs. This report is aimed to deliver, in an organised manner, all the relevant information gathered in SecWeb which can feed into these discussions and facilitate the decision-making process.

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Section II - Business models to present to the RCGs, the NCs and COM

Section II.1 - List of scenarios presented in previous studies and reports with the services linked

Section II.1.1 - FishPi2 (2017-2019)¹

The need for a secretariat was investigated and discussed during the work in the fishPi2 WP1. The role for the secretariat was defined as being administrative, at least for the short and medium-term. A secretariat could provide support to one or several RCGs.

The general tasks for the secretariat were mentioned as:

- Support the chairs to set up and run the RCG meeting(s);
- Support the chairs to report from RCG meeting(s);
- Support the chairs to organize and monitor intersessional subgroup work;
- Maintain the website for the RCGs.

Fishpi2 discussed the staff level required to fulfil the desired tasks and elaborated on the total costs for the service carried out by the secretariat.

Costs for the Secretariat

FishPi2 discussed the staff level required to fulfil the desired tasks and elaborated on the total costs for the service carried out by the Secretariat. The detailed estimated costings are based on the provision of Secretariat Services to two RCGs (Baltic and NSEA+NA) each holding a five-day meeting and a two-day meeting. In the example 2 levels of staff have been included and identified their skills and experiences.

RCG Co-ordinator - An individual with experience in the provision of Secretariat support for international organisations.

RCG Administrator - Familiar with and capable of efficient delivery of administrative services.

The detailed costs (time and euro) is outlined in table 1. It should be noted that this was an example as a basis for future discussion. An estimated budget of approximately €100 000- 120 000 could be sufficient to cover the needs for two RCGs (Baltic and NSEA+NA) including support for subgroup work. Several models for how the costs should be split could be considered. These include flat rates across MS or rates based on shares in the fisheries.

¹ [9b83208c-5dab-45b1-b70d-3aa3d99e8db0 \(europa.eu\)](https://doi.org/10.2790/9b83208c-5dab-45b1-b70d-3aa3d99e8db0)

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FishPi2 stressed already the need to examine if the Commission could contribute partly (or in full) to the costs²

Table I. Example of budget for Secretariat serve for RCGs

Secretariat Roles and Tasks Description	Resource (Days)		Resource (Cost)		Travel	Subsistence	Expenses
	Co-ordinator	Administrator	Co-ordinator	Administrator			
Support the Chairs in setting up and running RCG meeting(s) <i>Venue</i> - support Chairs by provide details of accommodation, travel and other organizational information relevant for the meeting in accordance with the rules and procedures. <i>Participants</i> – support Chairs with updated participant lists (including mailing lists), lists of NCs, make sure participants are nominated in accordance with the rules and procedures <i>Observers</i> – support Chairs, if needed, in inviting observers to meetings and ensure conformation with rules and procedures <i>Agenda</i> – support Chairs in set up agendas and make sure the agenda is sent to participants in accordance with rules and procedures <i>Documents</i> - Keep track of documents for the RCGs and make them available for the participants in accordance with the rules and procedures	0,75	7,05	€ 300	€ 2 820			
Act as rapporteur during RCG meetings	2,15	1,9	€ 860	€ 760			
Support Chairs in reporting RCG meetings	0,15	0,2	€ 60	€ 80			
Support Chairs in tracking and coordinating recommendations and agreements	11	5,1	€ 4 400	€ 2 040			
Support the Chairs in organising and monitoring intersessional subgroup work	4,5	2,25	€ 1 800	€ 900			
Maintain the website (and help to establish it)	14	2	€ 5 600	€ 800	€ 1 000	€ 2 000	
RCG Updates and briefings for stakeholders	20,25	2,95	€ 8 100	€ 1 180			
RCG Outreach and Representation	5	2,25	€ 2 000	€ 900			
Finance	100,1	20	€ 40 040	€ 8 000	€ 1 500	€ 1 500	
Risk Register	13	4	€ 5 200	€ 720			€ 22 000
Subject to financial model to support Secretariat	4	0,25	€ 1 600	€ 45			
Contractual Arrangements	4	0,11	€ 1 600	€ 20			€ 1 000
	3,1	2,35	€ 1 240	€ 423			
	0,25	0,01	€ 100	€ 2			
Total for 1 RCG per year	185,75	46,37	€ 74 300	€ 8 347	€ 2 500	€ 3 500	€ 23 000
Total for 2 RCGs per year (assuming pan-regional subgroups)	271,4	72,74	€ 108 560	€ 8 693			
Proportion of FTE (based on 220 days P/A)	1,23	0,33					

² https://www.masts.ac.uk/media/36863/fishpi2-final_v4_annexes.pdf

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Section II.I.II - RCG NA NS&EA & RCG Baltic

2019

During the 2019 meetings, RCG NA NS&EA & RCG Baltic concluded that the RCGs have complex and extensive tasks but are presently not supported by central resources. The RCGs are expected to interact with a wide group of end-users. This is difficult since the work of RCGs is largely invisible resulting in end-users being either unaware of RCGs or having unrealistic expectations.

After discussion on the fishPi2 project, which identified the need for robust funding of central resources for RCG work to be effective and consistent, the RCG identified central resources needed are:

Secretariat for the RCG;

Website for the RCGs.

Also was concluded that the estimated total cost for a secretariat and to establish a webpage would be 130 000 € the first year and 100 000 € the following.

Models to finance

It was suggested that the MS share the costs of the central resources. This has advantages as RCGs and MS keep independence and control over how central resources are developed and utilized.

If MS agrees to finance the central resources this can be done in different ways e.g. as a flat rate across MS, dependent on MS share in EMFF, or as combinations between the two. Below are tables (year 1 and year 2-5) showing examples of different MS contributions assuming different models. The example is including the 15 MS participating in RCG NA, NS&EA, and Baltic.

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Table 2. Possible options for distribution of the costs between MS to fund central resources necessary for effective RCG work.

Regions					
Baltic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic and North Atlantic					
			Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
YEAR 1, Total cost	130 000 €				2 500 €
	EMFF sum 2014-2020	Distribution key	EMFF Distribution key	Flat rate	Flat rate of Option 3 + distribution key
Member State	€	%	€	€	€
BE	41 746 051	1,01	1 313	8 667	3 434
DK	208 355 420	5,04	6 552	8 667	7 162
DE	219 596 276	5,31	6 905	8 667	7 413
IE	147 601 979	3,57	4 642	8 667	5 803
EE	100 970 418	2,44	3 175	8 667	4 759
ES	1 161 620 889	28,10	36 528	8 667	28 491
FR	587 980 173	14,22	18 490	8 667	15 656
LV	139 833 742	3,38	4 397	8 667	5 629
LT	63 432 222	1,53	1 995	8 667	3 919
NL	101 523 244	2,46	3 193	8 667	4 772
PL	531 219 456	12,85	16 705	8 667	14 386
PT	392 485 464	9,49	12 342	8 667	11 282
FI	74 393 168	1,80	2 339	8 667	4 165
SE	120 156 004	2,91	3 778	8 667	5 189
UK	243 139 437	5,88	7 646	8 667	7 940
	4 134 053 943	100,00	130 000	130 000	130 000
			Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
YEAR 2 - 5, Total cost	100 000 €				2 000 €
	EMFF sum 2014-2020	Distribution key	EMFF Distribution key	Flat rate	Flat rate of Option 3 + distribution key
Member State	€	%	€	€	€
BE	41 746 051	1,01	1 010	6 667	2 707
DK	208 355 420	5,04	5 040	6 667	5 528
DE	219 596 276	5,31	5 312	6 667	5 718
IE	147 601 979	3,57	3 570	6 667	4 499
EE	100 970 418	2,44	2 442	6 667	3 710
ES	1 161 620 889	28,10	28 099	6 667	21 669
FR	587 980 173	14,22	14 223	6 667	11 956
LV	139 833 742	3,38	3 382	6 667	4 368
LT	63 432 222	1,53	1 534	6 667	3 074
NL	101 523 244	2,46	2 456	6 667	3 719
PL	531 219 456	12,85	12 850	6 667	10 995
PT	392 485 464	9,49	9 494	6 667	8 646
FI	74 393 168	1,80	1 800	6 667	3 260
SE	120 156 004	2,91	2 906	6 667	4 035
UK	243 139 437	5,88	5 881	6 667	6 117
	4 134 053 943	100,00	100 000	100 000	100 000

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2020

In the 2020 RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic meetings it was mentioned that the shared funding for data collection in the EMFF is based on national envelopes (per MS) and does not foresee EU-wide or regional funding mechanisms. MSs have so far not made funds available to support the administrative needs of (pan)regional coordination structures.

In principle, the MS was agreed upon, but the NCs requested more time to take this into account and to allocate national resources for the funding. Due to an incompatibility of timing as the financial planning for 2019 could not be changed anymore the task to establish the fundament for long-term funding and establishing supporting tools for RCG became one of the main aims for WP3.

Section II.11- Listing the scenarios developed during the project SECWEB

To establish a long-term scenario for the implementation of the RCGs Secretariat, the calculations are done on a yearly basis and taking into account, the experience gained during the previous projects and the actions during the implementation of SECWEB. Running the pilot case of the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic, through the whole RCGs cycle has resulted in a full detailed description of the services and estimation of resources. The scenario considers 150 thousand euro as the preliminary annual budget. These estimations are valid until 2025. A revision of the costs is expected every three years to account for possible change of conditions, inflation rate, etc. Total amount per MS are total net amounts, VAT has not been considered in the calculations.

In total, seven scenarios were developed, with all scenarios presented taking into account providing support to the six RCGs, namely: RCG North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic; RCG Baltic; RCG Long Distance Fisheries; RCG Large Pelagics; RCG Economics Issues and RCG Mediterranean & Black Sea.

The seven scenarios studied are:

- Scenario 1 - Flat rate scenario
- Scenario 2 - Flat rate scenario with lower annual contribution by the LLC
- Scenario 3 - Based on annual contribution by MS according to the total EMFAF budget for the period 2021-2027
- Scenario 4 - according to the number of RCGs in which each MS is participating
- Scenario 5 – 3-component scenario: EC contribution, % of EMFAF, MS participation in RCGs
- Scenario 6 – 2-component scenario: this scenario was not presented to the NC and was calculated because the EC participation in scenario 5 is not confirmed.
- Scenario 7 – Ensuring the finance of the RCG secretariat by EC contribution only

Scenario 1 - Flat rate scenario

The first scenario created was the most simple and transparent one, according to the annual budget which is needed for the operation of the Secretariat divided equally between all MS. Each MS should pay annually a flat rate of 5769 €.

It was calculated what is the % of flat rate from the average annual distribution of the Global resources from the EMFAF per Member State for the period from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2027 from ANNEX V of Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1004.

Scenario 2 - Flat rate scenario with lower annual contribution by the LLC

In the second scenario, two different flat rates were taken into account.

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As land locked countries (LLC) are significantly less involved in the respective RCGs, this was taken into account in this business scenario. The land locked countries were allocated a lower contribution, being 3125€ and a twice higher amount for the other MS, each of them accounting for 6250€.

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

The third scenario is based on the % of EMFAF budget that each country will receive in the period 2021-2027. If this scenario is in place, each MS will have to pay 0.01977% of their EMFAF budget for the Secretariat. This scenario results in an annual budget ranging from 190€ up to 31.655€ by MS, depending on the combination of the respective % EMFAF budget. However, this scenario does not take into account the involvement in the respective RCGs.

Scenario 4 - according to the number of RCGs in which each MS is participating

The estimations in the fourth scenario are based on the number of RCGs in which each MS is participating in combination with the % of EMFAF budget that each country will receive in the period 2021-2027. The participation in the respective RCGs is as follows: 8 MS are part of RCG Baltic; 13 MS in RCG NANSEA; 10 MS in RCG Med&BS; 9 MS are participating in RCG LDF; 9 MS are members of RCG LP and all (26) MS are participating in RCG ECON. The sum of all MS participating in total to all RCGs, is 75. This number is used in the calculation for the 'weight' of a MS participating in a respective RCG.

For the calculations of the exact contributions by MS the total amount of 150 000 € was divided by 75 (the sum of the number of MS in each RCG) and multiplied by the number of RCG in which each MS is participating. On 4th January 2022 these four scenarios were communicated with the NC together with the first questionnaire, of which the results are presented together with a detailed information from the answers in point Section IV.II – Long-term strategy.

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After numerous meetings and discussions, the SECWEB team decided to propose to the NCs the 2nd scenario: the flat rate scenario seemed to be the most likely scenario to keep long-term funding simple and transparent. The reasoning behind it is that it is the only approach for a common responsibility about data collection. Keeping it simple is important, at the end it is for the overarching goal of the DCF.

The scenario is based on the very preliminary estimated annual budget/cost of 150 000 € for the RCGs Secretariat & Tools and EMFAF annual budgets of the MS. Since land-locked countries are presented in one RCG only and their EMFAF budgets are much lower than budgets of the other countries the proposed annual contribution for them is half of the contribution of other MS.

From the consultation process with all MS, it became clear that several MS would have difficulties with the administrative/legal implications of this cost-sharing. Therefore, it became clear that a further discussion was needed. A next consultation with all MS was organized to inventories per MS what system would work in order to have an administrative implementation acceptable per individual MS. From the feedback on this questionnaire, it became clear that some member states were in favor to the proposed flat rate scenario, while others were against the flat rate approaches. As a result, a fifth scenario was developed, which took into account the three different components presented in the previous scenarios.

* This scenario was revised due to the changes in some RCGs, but the differences with the initial version are negligible for the MS for which there were not changes in their participation.

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Scenario 5 – Three component scenario, which was presented to the NC and was commented during the NC meeting in September 2022

In the fifth proposed scenario for ensuring the finance of the RCG secretariat, the assumption was made for a hypothetical EC contribution, a MS contribution, according to the EMFAF and MS contribution, according to the number of RCGs. All the amounts are purely for the drafting of the financial estimation, and they could be easily adjusted if one of the three parts changes.

Initial assumption proposed: 45 000 € for EC contribution, 52 500 € contribution to be split by all MS based on EMFAF %, and 52 500 € contribution, according to the number of RCGs in which each country is participating.

1. The first component of the budget (EC contribution) is indicated only as a theoretical example and better visualization of the scenario and IT IS NOT proposed or confirmed by the Commission.

2. The second component is based on the distribution of the GLOBAL RESOURCES FROM THE EMFAF PER MEMBER STATE FOR THE PERIOD FROM 1 JANUARY 2021 TO 31 DECEMBER 2027 from ANNEX V of Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1004. The amount of €5,311,000,000 should be provided through national programmes co-financed by the EU budget and the EU Member States - the percentages of each MS are given in table 2, annex I.

The proposed amount of 52 500 euro is distributed according to the % of the EMFAF budget of each MS.

3. The third (and most complex component) is related to the complexity of the administrative support of each regional working group and the participation of each country in different RCGs.

The complexity of the support was proposed by the pilot Secretariat based on their experience gained in the project, and agreed by the project team. The weight of each RCG was estimated as: 30% for the RCG MED&BS, 20% for RCG ECON, 20% for RCG NANSEA, 10% for RCG LP, 10% for RCG LDF and 10% for RCG BALTIC. In the table XX in annex YY the participation of each MS in each RCG is summarized. All 4 landlocked countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia) are members of only one RCG, being the RCG ECON. The number for participating MS in the RCG varied between 8 MS in RCG Baltic and 26 MS in RCG ECON. The total parts (75) consist of 8 MS participating in RCG Baltic, 10 MS in RCG Med&BS, 13 MS in RCG NANSEA, 9 MS in RCG LDF, 9 MS in RCG LP and 26 in RCG ECON.

For the calculation of the costs per Member state per RCG the amount of 52 500 euro was multiplied by the proposed weight for the exact RCG and by the number 1, which is indicating the participation in the RCG and divided by the total number of MS participating in the exact RCG.

For example,

Belgium is participating in RCG NANSEA and RCG ECON, so the amount that is estimated for each participation is:

For RCG NANSEA = total amount for this third part (52 500 €) * the weight for RCG NANSEA (20% or 0.2 for the calculations) * 1 (indicating the participation in the RCG) / to the number of all MS participating in RCG NANSEA (13) => $52\,500 \times 0.2 \times 1 / 13 = 807.69$ euro

For RCG ECON = total amount for this third part (52 500 €) * the weight for RCG ECON (20% or 0.2 for the calculations) * 1 (indicating the participation in the RCG) / to the number of all MS participating in RCG ECON (26) => $52\,500 \times 0.2 \times 1 / 26 = 403.85$ euro

Each MS will have to cover financially points 2 and 3 from the current scenario, which means that in total Belgium should contribute by 1610 euro, from which 398 euro are calculated according to point 2 (Total

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EMFAF budget (5 311 000 000) divided by the Belgian budget (40 266 171) multiplied by 52500 euro) and 1212 euro according to point 3.

Scenario 6 – 2-component scenario: this scenario was not presented to the NC and was calculated because the EC participation in scenario 5 is hypothetical and not confirmed.

This scenario is following the same principles as points 2 and 3 the previous scenario. The main difference is that the hypothetical EC contribution is excluded from the calculations.

The budget of 150 000 euro was divided in 2 parts - 75 000 euro for contribution, according to the EMFAF and 75 000 EURO contribution, according to the number of RCGs in which each country is participating.

Scenario 7 – Ensuring the finance of the RCG secretariat by EC contribution only (hypothetical scenario)

The possibility of financing the RCGs Secretariat activities fully by the COM has been discussed in the implementation of the SECWEB project. By the end of the project, it was not clear yet if this was a realistic and achievable scenario. The current legislation and internal rules are rather complex and there was not enough time to investigate this scenario, and to look if this option is achievable or realistic.

However, if the mechanism of providing the finance needed by the EC for the RCG secretariat could be covered in full, this would simplify the different administrative approaches for the different MS and this would be more than welcomed by the MS.

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Section III - Clear description of the level of service related to the costs ('return on investment')

Activity description		RCG NANSEA	RCG Baltic	RCG LP	RCG LDF	RCG ECON	RCG Med&BS
REGULAR ACTIVITIES							
I. DAILY OPERATION							
1.1. Daily communication and correspondence		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.2. Maintaining effective records and administration		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.3. Prepare official letters, reports, etc		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.4. Finances		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.5. Staff		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. COMMUNICATION & DISSEMINATION							
2.1. Web & Social network maintenance		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.2. Corporative image maintenance		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.3. Developing contents for Newsletter		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.4. Press releases		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.5. Stakeholders' focal point		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.6. Consultation processes (questionnaires and surveys)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. MAINTENANCE OF WORKING TOOLS							
3.1. Stakeholders database							
3.2. Relevant projects database							
3.3. Maintenance of work/docs. Repositories (Sharepoint, MS Teams, google docs, etc)		✓	✓				
4. BASIC PROTOCOLS & ORGANISATION PROCEDURES							
4.1. Participants' itinerary (chair and co-chair mandate and remits)							
4.2. Rules of procedure (permanent update and accessibility)							
4.3. Terms of reference (permanent update and accessibility)							
4.4. Guidance through legal references							
4.5. Develop and maintain documents describing overarching RCGs processes, actions		✓	✓				
4.6. Track and facilitate activities and processes		✓	✓				
5. MEETINGS							
5.1. Secretariat meetings		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.2. RCGs Annual Technical Meeting		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Planning & preparation	Develop preliminary agenda						
	Convene meeting (Set doodle, save the date, invitation and reminders)						
	Registration system set up						✓
	Confirmation of Speakers						
	Confirmation of Rapporteurs						
	Registration of invitees						
	Written instructions: for presenters, for rapporteurs and for participants						
	Templates for presentations and reporting	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Preparation meeting with presenters and rapporteurs						
	Supervision of Sharepoint uploads, meeting documents,...	✓	✓				
Accomplishment	Logistics set up (virtual and/or physical venue)	✓	✓				
	Accommodation						
	Amenities (coffee breaks, lunch, dinner, activities...)						
	Reception (registration, signature sheets, etc)						
	Orientation/support to attendees						
Reporting	Audiovisuals						
	House Keeping Rules and Time-keeping						
	Meeting Notes, pictures and other graphic evidence	✓	✓				
	Management of amenities	✓	✓				
	Follow up and compilation of documents to feed reports	✓	✓				
	Report co-edition	✓	✓				
	Draft report shared w/ participants for feedback	✓	✓				
	Integration of feedback	✓	✓				
Update	Report submission	✓	✓				
	Public Communication	✓	✓				
6. OTHER MEETINGS & EVENTS							
6.1. RCG Pre & Decision meeting (Planning & preparation, Accomplishment, Reporting)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2. Liaison meeting (Planning & preparation, Accomplishment, Reporting)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. INTERSESSIONAL WORK FOLLOW UP							
7.1. RCGs and ISSGs workshops & training workshops (Eventual support to: Planning & p							
7.2. Monitoring of milestones and achievements							
ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES							
8. NEW INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS BY THE RCGs INVOLVING THE							
8.1. Preparation support for new initiatives and projects (SECWEB, FISHN'CO,...)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
							2021 - onwards
							2022 - onwards

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Starting from 2023, the Secretariat should cover the following service lines. Further specifications on them will be elaborated and described within the annual work-plan of the Secretariat.

1. Daily regular operations and processes:

- 1.1. Manage daily communication and correspondence with the RCGs stakeholders.
- 1.2. Maintain and manage interaction/requests records.
- 1.3. Draft official letters, reports, etc.
- 1.4. Manage the secretariat's legal, finances and staff obligations according to the annual plan and guarantee due diligence and accountability of the service.
- 1.5 Maintain working tools and repositories such as:
 - 1.5.1. Stakeholders' database
 - 1.5.2. Maintenance of virtual repositories and working areas.
 - 1.5.3. Other databases, logbooks or records agreed in the annual workplan for the Secretariat.
- 1.6. Maintain basic protocols and organisational procedures updated and accessible for the interested parties:
 - 1.6.1. Participants' itinerary (chair and co-chair mandate and remits)
 - 1.6.2. Rules of procedure
 - 1.6.3. Terms of reference
- 1.7. Communication and dissemination activities:
 - 1.7.1. Web, e-newsletter & Social network maintenance and promotion
 - 1.7.2. Corporative image and branding strategy maintenance
 - 1.7.3. Become the Stakeholders' focal point and helpdesk for the RCGs network
 - 1.7.4. Manage consultation processes (questionnaires and surveys)
- 1.8. Elaborate (in consultation with the RCG and ISSG chairs) a year-around action plan, with KPIs and targets for implementation and monitoring, and subject it to approval during the RCGs annual meeting cycle.

2. Support to meetings and meetings' reporting:

- 2.1. Support the RCG chairs to prepare, set up, announce and manage the RCG Technical Meetings and the Liaison Meeting.
- 2.2. Support the RCG chairs across the reporting process from RCG meetings (from the compilation of inputs to the final edition and dissemination).
Support intersessional activity
- 2.3. Support the RCG chairs to organise and monitor the intersessional work and achievements.
- 2.4. Provide administrative support for the design and launch of new initiatives by the RCG network.

OVERALL EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- ✓ A full-time dedicated Secretariat support service for the RCGs enables a consistent approach to administering RCG activities, facilitates communication, and enhances the intersessional work, supporting also the work of sub-groups.
- ✓ A dynamic and permanently updated website will be kept available including as features:
 - Integration – allowing seamless synchronization with third-party information needs and requests.
 - Responsive display – to serve content across multiple devices, screens, and browsers.

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- User experience- maintaining a satisfactory user experience throughout the website sections.
- Accessibility – To any interested visitor in a user-friendly way across the website sections.
- Retention- keeping visitors coming back to the website.
- Links to relevant restricted access sites/virtual environments.
- ✓ The Visual identity for the RCGs is increasingly consolidated and visibility and understanding of the work by the RCGs is enhanced for the relevant stakeholder groups.
- ✓ A regularly updated Stakeholders' database helps the communication function among the RCGs' experts and the stakeholders' community.
- ✓ Internal communication protocols and help-desk in place makes it easier for any newcomer to efficiently join, adopt responsibilities, and contribute to the RCGs objectives and work commitments.
- ✓ The public description of the secretariat functions, operational working protocols and commitments will build trust and enhance the whole network transparency and accountability.

Preliminary disaggregation of the budget is presented in the table below. It needs to be noticed that these estimates are based on the experience gained upon the pilot period during SecWeb, and considering the continuity of the service without significant disruptions. Disruptions would likely have an extra cost for the network related to the learning curve of the staff operating the service and the update of the communication tools developed by the project (.e. the website, repositories and other operational tools such as the stakeholder's database, etc.).

Secretariat (breakdown of budget needs)	
I full year service	BUDGET (in €)
I full time eq. technical manager	40,000.00
I full time eq. assistant (Admin and communication)	29,000.00
I part-time supervisor (10% dedication)	7,200.00
I part-time back-up support, for holidays or any other extraordinary service needs (10% dedication)	6,200.00
ICT support services	12,000.00
Travels and subsistence costs (I full week for I person x 8 trips a year)	13,600.00
Logistics for meetings (coffebreaks, venue, audiovisuals)	20,000.00
Other minor costs (software licenses, computing and peripherals, printings and other consumables and small services, etc)	6,000.00
Indirect costs	16,080.00
TOTAL	150,080.00

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Section IV - The development of long-term strategy and a short-term operational plan for the RCG's support structure (for 3 years beyond the SECWEB).

Section IV.I – Short-term operational plan

The diversity and complexity of the information gathered made it necessary for the SecWeb to consider options to buy some time for further analysis without disrupting the progress achieved so far. The small amounts in the distributed scenario allocated to most of the countries would make it feasible to keep the service with a direct contract on a country-by-country basis for year 2023. This led to an analysis of options for a short-term solution to be adopted right beyond SecWeb implementation period, while MSs and the EC could further explore the feasibility of options for the long-term stability of the service.

Taking into account the replies to the questionnaire asking Member States about public procurement regulation in each country (Annex II), the following documents were sent to the MS for ensuring the short-term operation of the Secretariat. The following tables synthesise the outcomes of the consultation process and classifies the countries according to three main situations:

- Group I are the countries for which the amount for payment assigned by the latest scenario is below the threshold amount established for a procurement process, and thus could commit contractually to the Secretariat Service provider before the end of 2022; or before the end of February 2023 at the latest;
- Group II is made by the countries with allocated fees below the public procurement thresholds but should add three offers to commit to a provider and assign the contract to the provider at the lowest price;
- Group III is made by the countries to which the amounts assigned are above the market price for a public procurement process.

Finally, a few countries are out of these three groups despite the small amounts assigned to them by the funding scenario. These land-locked countries find that the contractual procedures would take too much administrative burden that would cost more than the assigned fee itself.

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TIMELINE FOR CONTRACTUALISATION OF THE RCG's Secretariat Service in 2023

LEGAL POSSIBILITIES vs FUNDING SCENARIOS and TIMELINE

Overview

TOTAL Contribution		63.176		40.568		1.254
Time frame		Contract in force by January 2023		Contract in force beyond February 2023 (and before 30 th June 2023)		Not in agreement with the short-term scenario solution
Group 1: Below the financial (euro) limit & do not need more than one offer	MS	Annual Contribution	MS	Annual Contribution	MS	Annual Contribution
	EST	3.414	GRC	6.269		
	IRL	3.202	HRV	4.971		
	FRA	8.976	HUN	777		
	CYP	2.941	MLT	2.778		
	NLD	2.763	ITA	8.268		
	POL	7.516				
	ROU	3.585				
	FIN	1.769				
	SWE	3.013				
	BGR	2.819				
	DNK	3.854				
Group 2: Below the financial (euro) limit but needs more than one offer	BEL	1.610	LVA	3.784		
			LTU	3.056		
Group 3: Above the financial (euro) limit (Total exceeded amount 4.946€)	ESP	15.029 (exceeded amount 30€)	PRT	6.120 (exceeded amount 1.120€)		
	SVN	2.215 (exceeded amount 251€)	DEU	4.545 (exceeded amount 3.545€)		
Group 4: Other cases	AUT	470			CZE	700
					SVK	554
Total Group 1		43.852		23.063		66.915
Total Group 2		1.610		6.840		8.450
Total Group 3		17.244		10.665		27.909
Total Group 4		470				1.254
						1.724

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TIMELINE FOR CONTRACTUALISATION OF THE RCG's Secretariat Service in 2023

SUMMARY FROM THE ANSWERS RECEIVED FROM MS.

Group 1: Below the financial limit & do not need more than one offer

	MS Annual Contribution	€ limit for a direct service contract	€ limit & more than one offer	Can your country have the service contract for the Secretariat services in force from 1st January 2023?	Notes
EST	3.414	No limit	No limit	YES	
IRL	3.202	No limit	No limit	YES	
GRC	6.269	30.000	30.000	MAYBE	
FRA	8.976	12.000	12.000	A contract needs to be signed by mid-December.	
HRV	4.971	13.272,28	13.272,28	MAYBE	
ITA	8.268	139.000		NO	
CYP	2.941	5.000	5.000	YES	
HUN	777	No limit	2.500	MAYBE	
MLT	2.778	10.000	134.999,99	MAYBE	
NLD	2.763	53.750	70.000	YES	
POL	7.516	No limit	No limit	YES	
ROU	3.585	54.000	28.300	YES	
FIN	1.769	60.000	30.000	YES	
SWE	3.013	74.037	130.063	YES	
TOTAL	60.242				

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	MS Annual Contribution	€ limit direct service	€ limit & more than one offer	Contract in force from 1st January 2023?	Notes
BGR	2.819	15.398	n.a	YES	
DNK	3.854	6.500	n.a	YES	
TOTAL	6.673				

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TIMELINE FOR CONTRACTUALISATION OF THE RCG's Secretariat Service in 2023

Group 2: Below the financial limit but need more than 1 offer

	MS Annual Contribution	€ limit direct service	€ limit & more than one offer	Can your country have the service contract for the Secretariat services in force from 1st January 2023?	Notes
BEL	1610	0	1.001	Sign by mid-December	3 offers needed
LVA	3784	Not limit	0	MAYBE	2 offers needed
LTU	3056	10.000	n.a.		3 offers needed
TOTAL	8.450				

Group 3: Over the financial limit

	MS Annual Contribution	€ limit direct service	€ limit & more than one offer	Can your country have the service contract for the Secretariat services in force from 1st January 2023?	Notes
DEU	4.545	1.000	25.000	NO	Possible exception for this case
ESP	15.029	14.999	0	YES	
PRT	6.120	5.000	20.000	MAYBE	
SVN	2.215	2.000	2.000	YES	
TOTAL	27.910				

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Group 4: Other cases

	TOTAL MS Annual Contribution	€ limit direct service	€ limit & more than one offer	Can your country have the service contract for the Secretariat services in force from 1st January 2023?	Notes
CZE	700			No. But willing to contribute to the long-term solution	Will be hired as a technical assistance
AUT	470				
SVK	554	Not limit	n.a	NO	
TOTAL	1.724				

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SERVICE OFFER FORMAL LETTER

From:

Centro Tecnológico del Mar, Fundación CETMAR.

Eduardo Cabello s/n

Vigo, Spain

XXth November 2022

To:

XXXX
XXXX
XXXX
XXXX

Sub: Regarding service offer approval for RCG's Secretariat services

Dear Mr. XXXX,

This letter is to formally submit CETMAR's offer for the provision of the "RCGs' Secretariat services" for their assessment and eventual approval by the XXXX. The quotation includes XXXX's proportional share of the RCG's Secretariat services from January to December 2023 according to the scenario presented at 2022 RCG Decision Meeting by the SecWeb Coordination.

Attached with this letter you can find the financial offer as well as the technical offer, with a detailed technical description of the services, included. Additional information about timeline for contractualisation of the RCG's Secretariat Service in 2023 is also enclosed.

At your earliest convenience, we would appreciate that you review this information and please share your feedback especially if there are any changes or any additional requirements needed to initiate the contractual procedure.

If no changes or additional information is needed, then please send us back your approval of the offer no later than 7th December 2022.

Thank you for your prompt action regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Ms. Paloma Rueda Crespo

Managing director and legal representative
Centro Tecnológico del Mar, Fundación CETMAR

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Regional Coordination Groups' Secretariat SERVICE OFFER ACCEPTANCE FORM

OFFER by: Centro Tecnológico del Mar, Fundación CETMAR.

Address: Eduardo Cabello s/n

Postal Code: 36208 City: Vigo Country: Spain

VAT no: G36885853

IBAN: ES98 2080 0572 5530 4000 0459



CONTRACTOR: XXXX

Address: XXXX.

Postal Code: XXXX City: XXXX Country: XXXX

VAT no.

SERVICE SHORT DESCRIPTION: Secretariat Support Services assisting the participation of XXXX in the Regional Coordination Groups of the EU Fisheries Data Collection Framework. (Detailed description of the service is enclosed as "Technical Specifications" to this Service Offer Acceptance Form).

SCOPE: RCGs in which XXXX is participating:

SERVICE PERIOD: 1st January 2023 – 31st Dec. 2023

FINANCIAL OFFER

SERVICE CONCEPT	PRICE
XXXX 's annual contribution to RCG's Secretariat services (*)	XXXX
Total without VAT	XXXX
VAT	N/A
TOTAL EUR	XXXX

(*) Should there be any circumstances that shorten the period to cover for the provision of services, the invoiced amount will be adjusted proportionally.

INVOICING INSTRUCTIONS: will be provided by the CONTRACTOR with the submission of this OFFER ACCEPTANCE.

Approved by:

Management unit

Date

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Section IV.II – Long-term strategy

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

Implementation of the activity should be granted from 2023 onwards, until 2027 and beyond.

The activities will be carried out consistently with the business models and funding scenarios found most suitable and acceptable by the Member States (MS) and the European Commission (EC), as developed under SecWeb WP3. The work of the RCGs' Secretariat beyond SecWeb implementation period must be built upon the project's outcomes and the services should reach all the RCGs. Given the different background and context of the RCGs, the working methodology for the Secretariat should enable some flexibility to adapt to the specificities of each RCG, however, the overall service lines and protocols will be shared and defined in common. The outcomes and workplan from and for the subsequent intersessional periods will be presented and discussed for approval during the RCGs annual meetings.

The MS and the EC will contribute jointly, with financial support to the service contractualisation on the basis of the funding scenarios presented as annex to this document. The service provider will invoice each party according to the share of the service that corresponds, according to the amounts set in the long-term financial plan and to the legal/administrative basis enabling the contractual procedure in each country. Each country will send a formal acceptance letter to the service provider before the start of the implementation period, specifying the amount, the invoicing period, the legal entity details, etc.

The first questionnaire was distributed among the MS at 4th of January 2022, together with the 4 scenarios:

1. Flat rate annual contribution by MS;
2. Flat rates annual contribution by MS with lower amount for the land-locked countries;
3. Annual contribution by MS according to the total EMFAF budget for the period 2021-2027;
4. Annual contribution by MS according number of RCGs in which each MS is participating.

The questions from the survey, together with a summary of the answers are presented below.

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MS feedback on Secretariat's long-term funding

Questions overview

Despite the efforts to find a common administrative procedure for all MS for the long-term funding of the Secretariat some questions still remain. In order to proceed gather MS's feedback on the following:

1. Is it acceptable for your MS to apply the proposed flat rate scenario?
 1. If NO please provide your concerns.
 2. What scenario is acceptable for your MS and why? Please describe
2. Is it possible for you to allocate the proposed amount from your national EMFAF Operational programme?
 1. If NO please mark one or more from the options bellow and provide explanation on the obstacles.
3. Is it possible for your MS to include this activity in your WP and allocate the amount for cost on yearly basis starting from 2023?
 1. If NO please provide your concerns
4. Is it acceptable for your MS and your EMFAF managing authority to have an invoice from an external (outside of your MS) body?
 1. If NO please provide your concerns
5. Please provide acceptable procedure for the election of responsible organisation. More information on the procedures is accessible on the following web link - https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_public_proc_en.pdf.
6. Do you think that it is needed to have a common (multilateral) agreement between all MS for the funding of the RCG Secretariat?
 1. Please provide your comments
7. Any other comments or suggestions?

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MS's feedback question by question

Question 1: **Is it acceptable for your MS to apply the proposed flat rate scenario?**

1. If NO please provide your concerns
2. What scenario is acceptable for your MS and why? Please describe

	Q 1	Q 1.1	Q 1.2.
AUT	No	As a land-locked country Austria is only involved in one of the six RCGs. A flat rate leads to an over-proportionate contribution from land-locked countries. It is unacceptable that Austria with a share of 0,12% (!!!) of the EMFAF-budget should have the highest relative contribution to this project.	According to the Commission's implementing decision (EU) 2021/1168, Austria is not required to provide socio-economic data on aquaculture. Therefore, we always considered our data collection activities in this area as voluntary and this included participation in RCGs. At the utmost, we could consider a calculation method that takes into account the number of RCGs MS participate in – in addition to the available funds and the requirement to undertake data collection on an obligatory/voluntary basis (see above)
BGR	Yes		
HRV	Yes		
CYP	No	It is not much fair for small countries.	We consider a fairer allocation of the amount would be to assign a certain percentage to data collection budget of each MS.
CZE	Yes		Invoice issued to the National Correspondent for participation in RCG ECON (see questions 6.1 and 7).
DNK	Yes		
EST	Yes		
FIN	Yes	-	-
FRA	Yes		
DEU	Yes		
GRC	Yes		We believe that the flat scenario is acceptable, as the RCG Secretariat aims is to support the RCGs, so all MS should have an equal share on the funding.
HUN	Yes		Invoice issued for participation in RCG ECON
IRL	Yes		
ITA	Yes		
LVA	Yes		
LTU	Yes		Flat rate scenario is ok
MLT	Yes	NA	NA
POL	Yes		

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PRT	No	A flat rate must be applied over the amount of DCF and not over the budget/cost for the RCGs Secretariat.	The flat rate only can be applied over the amount of DCF of each MS. Additionally Commission must do a legal act.
ROU	Yes		
SVK	No	Rate for Slovakia is still under consultation process with our budget department.	in consultation process
ESP	No	See comments under 7. below.	Being this a periodical rather than an occasional payment we believe, as we have stated in previous occasions, the Commission itself facing this expenditure could be a better solution.
SWE	Yes		
NLD	Yes		

Question 2: Is it possible for you to allocate the proposed amount from your national EMFAF Operational programme?

2.1 If NO, please mark one or more from the options bellow and provide explanation on the obstacles.

	Q 2	Q 2.1.
AUT	No	Insufficient budget
BGR	Yes	
HRV	Yes	
CYP	Yes	
CZE	Yes	
DNK	Yes	
EST	Yes	The funds cannot be allocated directly in our EMFAF OP, but if the costs are foreseen in NWP, then they are eligible, similarly to other DCF costs.
FIN	Yes	
FRA	Yes	
DEU	Yes	
GRC	Yes	
HUN	Yes	
IRL	Yes	

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ITA	Yes	
LVA	No	Public procurement
LTU	Yes	The agreement will be needed
MLT	Yes	
POL	Yes	
PRT	No	Other legal aspects
ROU	Yes	
SVK	No	budget of the ministry of agriculture
ESP	No	See comments under 7. below.
SWE	Yes	
NLD	No	

Question 3: Is it possible for your MS to include this activity in your WP and allocate the amount for cost on yearly basis starting from 2023?

3.1. If NO please provide your concerns

	Q 3	Q 3.1.
AUT	No	See above
BGR	Yes	
HRV	Yes	Yes, provided that relevant information is shared
CYP	Yes	
CZE	Yes	
DNK	Yes	
EST	Yes	
FIN	Yes, No	This activity can be a part of the WP. It can be part of the entire DCF project.
FRA	Yes	
DEU	Yes	
GRC	No	The WP has already been approved and no changes can be done at this point. Nevertheless, we will examine the possibility to allocate the amount as soon as possible, after all MS reach to an agreement concerning the way of the funding of the Secretariat.
HUN	Yes	

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IRL	Yes	
ITA	Yes	
LVA	No	We could not pay without public procurement
LTU	Yes	
MLT	Yes	NA
POL	Yes	option "YES" is subject to finalisation by 2023 and approval of national Operational Programme (under EMFAF) by COM
PRT	No	We need legal base, because this is not included in the eligibility of EMFAF.
ROU	Yes	
SVK	No	budget for data collection is allocated for pilot study
ESP	No	See comments under 7. below.
SWE	Yes	
NLD	Yes	

Question 4: Is it acceptable for your MS and your EMFAF managing authority to have an invoice from an external (outside of your MS) body?

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4.1. If NO please provide your concerns.

Q 4	Q 4.1.
AUT	To be decided at a later stage
BGR	Yes
HRV	Yes
CYP	Yes
CZE	Yes
DNK	Yes
EST	Yes
FIN	Yes, No It is possible to have an invoice from an external body. In fact, LUKE needs it in order for LUKE to pay once LUKE has received the invoice. Managing authority is not relevant in this respect.

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		Concern probably about the selection of the entity conducting the secretariat: it should be clarified who is going to run the secretariat (external provider, European Commission?) and who will mandate it - in case of an external provider, proof should be given to ensure that external provider was selected through a public contract procedure which follows national rules.
FRA	Yes	
DEU	Yes	
GRC	Yes	
HUN	Yes	
IRL	Yes	
ITA	Yes	MS don't have a direct relationship with the contractor. It is a reimbursement for the other contractor
LVA	Yes	
LTU	Yes	
MLT	Yes	NA
POL	Yes	
PRT	No	Portugal must comply with Public procurement.
ROU		
SVK	No	Contribution of Slovakia is planed from the budget of the ministry
ESP	No	See comments under 7. below.
SWE	Yes	
NLD	Yes	

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Question 5: **Please provide acceptable procedure for the election of responsible organisation. More information on the procedures is accessible on the following web link - https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_public_proc_en.pdf**

Q 5	
AUT	The procedure causing the smallest administrative burden should be selected.
BGR	Open – Call for tenders
HRV	Open – Call for tenders
CYP	Restricted - selection and shortlisting on the basis of a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) with a minimum of five candidates.
CZE	Restricted - selection and shortlisting on the basis of a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) with a minimum of five candidates.
DNK	Competitive Dialogue
EST	Open – Call for tenders
FIN	
FRA	Open – Call for tenders
DEU	Restricted - selection and shortlisting on the basis of a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) with a minimum of five candidates.
GRC	Restricted - selection and shortlisting on the basis of a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) with a minimum of five candidates.
HUN	Restricted - selection and shortlisting on the basis of a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) with a minimum of five candidates.
IRL	
ITA	
LVA	Open – Call for tenders
LTU	Competitive Dialogue
MLT	Open – Call for tenders
POL	Restricted - selection and shortlisting on the basis of a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) with a minimum of five candidates.
PRT	Open – Call for tenders
ROU	Negotiated Procedure with publication of contract notice (CN)
SVK	Restricted - selection and shortlisting on the basis of a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) with a minimum of five candidates.
ESP	Open – Call for tenders

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SWE	Restricted - selection and shortlisting on the basis of a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) with a minimum of five candidates.
NLD	Competitive Dialogue

Question 6: Do you think that it is needed to have a common (multilateral) agreement between all MS for the funding of the RCG Secretariat??

6.1. Please provide your comments

	Q 6	Q 6.1.
AUT	No	It is unclear who should be the partners of such an agreement. It seems a burden some exercise
BGR	No	
HRV	Yes	Please consider the information provided as preliminary, we may change our position based on the development of the situation in the later stages.
CYP	Yes	We consider it would be easier for the EMFAF Managing Authority to proceed with the payment.
CZE	Yes	The Czech Republic wants to support the activities of the RCG, in our case especially ECON. In terms of the process of how to submit the contribution, we are able to process everything through a project financed from the OP Fisheries. However, at the same time, very strongly, we would like to express that the proposed system is administratively very, very complicated. The processing costs alone will exceed the amount of RCG support itself. Therefore, we propose that the support of the RCG's activities be, for example, tied to the National Correspondent, which would pay, for example, an annual membership fee that would correspond to the amount of the given MS. In the case of CZE, the National Correspondent is paid from the OP Fisheries project and this fee would be generated from this project, where, for example, training amounts are taken into account.
DNK	Yes	
EST	Yes	It feels like a safe option to have an agreement that confirms that all MS are in for the funding. If public tender is needed then whoever is making the tender needs also to be sure that everybody will pay their share. This multilateral agreement should contain information about the tasks of the secretariat, which MS are contributing + how much and also a mandate for a person/institute/country who is responsible for making the contract happen (it means conducting a procurement if needed, signing the contract). I also think that is should be thought beforehand who will send out the invoices to the MSs - would it be an institute who has the mandate to sign the contract or would the invoice be sent by secretariat to all MS. If this logic is written in the multilateral agreement, then it would be bases for "why do we need to pay the invoice from some random company/institute".
FIN	No	It is necessary for the RCG to agree that the secretariat is funded. This would need to be reflected in the minutes of a RCG meeting. No formal agreement is needed
FRA	Yes	It should be clarified who will run the call for tenders and perform the selection of the entities for the secretariat, and which role play MS in this process. Moreover, the content of the secretariat activities should be agreed within MS before any call for tenders (eg it is not clear in the documents provided whether RCG Secretariat will operate also for Med&BS RCG)
DEU	Yes	
GRC	Yes	We think that reaching a common agreement is essential for the viability of this the procedure.
HUN	Yes	Hungary wants to support the activities of RCG, in our case especially ECON. In terms of the process of how to submit the contribution, we would like to process everything through a DCF project financed from the OP.

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IRL	No	we do not require an agreement, but if the view was that an agreement was required in order to confirm the commitment of each MS to contribute we would be happy to sign an agreement.
ITA	Yes	Answer 5, to choose the way that best fit the choice of the contractor taking into account the amount of the contract and the threshold
LVA	Yes	
LTU	Yes	
MLT	Yes	This would simplify the process
POL	Yes	Multilateral agreement seems an easy form of a legal basis for cost sharing
PRT	Yes	Transparency must be a principle.
ROU	Yes	
SVK	Yes	
ESP	Yes	See comments under 7. below.
SWE	Yes	
NLD	No	

Other comments and feedback received

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AUT	Participation in SECWEB should be voluntary and adapted to MS needs.
CZE	We would prefer the simplest possible way and method of financing the RCG secretariat. In general, it would be best if the RCG could be funded directly by the EC, especially in relation to the EC's need to collect data for the Common Fisheries Policy. As a result, there would be no administratively complex process of returning funds allocated and already transferred to individual MSs and then back to EC. Generally, in the case that there will be an agreement between the MSs on separate contributions, the proposed amount of 3125 EUR/Year for CZE is acceptable.
EST	A comment about how the election of responsible organisation is made - it is not relevant for us :) It turned out that important things are that the cost is eligible (if the secretariat is written in the WP and COM has accepted it, then we can pay for the cost) and we need to have some bases why this specific company is sending us the bill (either a signed agreement and/or a contract needs to be there). But it is not important how the service provider (secretariat) was selected, unless the tender is done in Estonia and then our national rules apply and probably a public international procurement needs to be followed. But as I understood the issue, then the selection upon the service provider can also be a simple decision, i.e. CETMAR has participated in the SECWEB project and thus has the knowledge base, so that is why we chose them as a contract partner.
HUN	We would prefer the simplest possible way and method for financing the RCG secretariat. In general, it would be best if the RCG could be founded directly by the EC, in relation to the EC's need to collect data or the Common Fisheries Policy. In the case that there will be an agreement between the MSs on separate contributions, the proposed amount of 3125 EUR/year for HU is acceptable.

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ITA	<p>answer 4 : please note that in Italy the invoice, strictly speaking, is a list of goods sent or services provided to the Managing Authority, with a statement of the sum due for these, while a list of goods sent or services provided to an external organisation and funded by the managing authority is called "reimbursement"</p> <p>answer 5: generally speaking, Italy takes into account the total amount of the tender and its threshold, in order to choose the procedure that best fit.</p> <p>However, the question is unclear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why does the RCGs Secretariat ask to Member States which procedure to adopt for the election of the responsible organisation, shouldn't the RCGs call the procedure common to all Member States?
POL	Regarding Question 5: any procedure for the election of responsible organisation is acceptable. The simplest the best.
PRT	In question 5 also the option 'Restricted - selection and shortlisting on the basis of a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) with a minimum of five candidates' is feasible.
ROU	Regarding the question no. 4 at this moment we don't know if our managing authority will accept an invoice from an external body.
ESP	<p>Under our national regulation it is not possible to make any payment without following strict, time-consuming contracting procedures, involving complicated public procurement, as well as mandatory audits.</p> <p>Being this a periodical rather than an occasional payment we believe, as we have stated in previous occasions, the Commission itself facing this expenditure could be a better solution.</p>
SWE	Our answers are based on the premise that we can allocate the proposed amount from your national EMFAF Operational programme, i.e. that the cost is eligible. This is not yet agreed with the EMFAF managing authority in Sweden.

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Based on consultations with the MS and Commission, there are three alternative options considered on how to formalize the long-term support of the Secretariat:

1. The creation of a common pot of funds with contributions from each Member State according to different scenarios for which information has been distributed and one MS acting as a "depository" of the funds and contractor of the service provider. In this scenario, the contract would be a **public procurement** contractual procedure. This is considered very complex and lengthy at the bureaucratic level and in some countries their administration may not even have a way to implement it.
2. The **constitution of a legal entity** with a form like that of an Advisory Council, taking as a model the AC-LDAC so that it could be based in Spain as part of the voluntary agreement of the members of the AC. The MS, the Commission and CETMAR itself would be involved, the latter in providing facilities and some of the necessary means for the support service as the AC builds its own structure gradually. MS would pay a member fee to the AC, the Commission could make a direct allocation of funds through a direct grant. It is less complex than the previous one but it is not a completely immediate solution either since the decision-making process prior to the start-up of the service could make this process quite slow and bureaucratically expensive.

During the second half of 2022, after receiving feedback on the long-term funding of the Secretariat from MS, the establishment of a legal entity was identified as scenario, which should be further investigated. Thus, a non-profit organization would be the most suitable legal form. SECWEB team looked at the case of Advisory Councils (ACs) as a reference, in particular LDAC. Several exchanges and a meeting with the LDAC general secretary were done during the project.

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Legal background for the establishment of a supporting structure for RCGs, the Secretariat

It was found out that there are significant differences in the legal background for the establishment of ACs in comparison to RCG's Secretariat.

The most important references that supported the establishment of ACs are:

2004 -Council Decision of 19 July 2004 establishing Regional Advisory Councils under the Common Fisheries Policy (2004/585/EC) (repealed and superseded in 2007))

2007 A modification incorporated the financial provisions to enable the funding by the EC

Prior to establishment stakeholders in the fisheries sector make a request to the MS (with Objectives, RoPs, budget, etc – the SecWeb project provided the RCGs with most of these elements) and then, the MSs assess such a request and transmit a recommendation to the EC.

2007 –Commission decision of 29 March 2007 declaring operational the Regional Advisory Council for the High Seas/Long Distance Fleet under the Common Fisheries Policy (2007/206/EC)

2013 –2015 –2021 and 2022 Delegated Regulations laying down detailed rules on the functioning of the Advisory Councils under the Common Fisheries Policy

3. The last proposal is the following:

All countries involved agree to **contract** their share of the **service directly with the secretariat provider** (instead of making a common fund in a state). As it is a small annual amount, it is considered that direct award should not be problematic or not at least for the majority of Member States. Also, those MS who need to do procurement, believe that if this is the case, and the MS need to request three offers, they stated that this should not be problematic. It is agreed that Secweb should describe the technical commitments (which would be like a technical specification).

Scenario 5 was created in regards to this last proposal. The fee is calculated to be proportional to the country's participation in the EMFAF and participation in the RCGs, and that each RCG has a weight for its activity and dimension. Additionally, COM could also consider the possibility to be a customer of the service and contribute to a part.

At the RCG Decision Meeting on 19 September 2022, the NCs agreed in principle to support the long-term functioning of the RCG secretariat beyond the SECWEB project. The grant coordinator for the SECWEB project presented the state of play in the NC meeting, and raised the issue of future financing, after the end of the grant. There was common agreement that the continuation of the secretariat must be ensured. It was concluded that, although the exact amounts are not known at this stage, it is essential that a commitment is made by all MS, to ensure financing of the secretariat beyond the duration of the grant. It was agreed that all MS would confirm this commitment by including a standard statement /in the text box below/, to be provided by the RCG secretariat, in an amended national work plan for 2023. Potential participation by the COM in the financing will be confirmed at a later stage.

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General comment: Use this text box to provide information on other data collection activities that relate to your EMFAF operational programme and need to be included in the work plan and the annual report. Describe activities that are funded by the DCF but fulfil objectives under other EMFAF priorities, like marine knowledge, or activities funded by the DCF, but without a direct link to the EU MAP specific requirements or WP template tables, like freshwater fisheries. You can also include one-off specific studies for a particular end-user need that do not enter the regular data collection.

1. Aim of the data collection activity

Support the operation and functioning of the RCG's Secretariat for a fluent regional coordination of data collection activities.

2. Duration of the data collection activity

01/01/2023 – 31/12/2025

3. Methodology and expected outcomes of the data collection activity

The Secretariat's organizational structured has been set up and pilot tested throughout SecWeb project. The key functions of the RCG's Secretariat have been determined in close collaboration with all RCGs, in particular with RCG and Intersessional Subgroups (ISSGs) chairs. A business model has been developed. In addition, good practices in communication within and among the RCGs have been promoted and installed. The overall capacity to reach out to a wider public and increase the visibility of the work and output of the RCGs has been boosted with the development of a dedicated website and the consolidation of a visual identity.

RCG chairs and the RCG's network in general have acknowledged the added value of having an RCG's Secretariat to the overall aim of improving data collection activities.

Based on SecWeb project outputs the proposed data collection activity will connect the whole RCG network and stakeholders to work together on common goals. The Secretariat provides fluent administrative and coordination support for more efficient regional coordination liberating national experts involved in data collection activities from heavy burden administrative tasks.

Overall expected outcomes

✓ A full-time dedicated Secretariat support service for the RCGs enables a consistent approach to administering RCG activities, facilitates communication, and enhances the intersessional work, supporting also the work of sub-groups.

✓ A dynamic and permanently updated website will be kept available including as features:

- o Integration – allowing seamless synchronization with third-party information needs and requests.
- o Responsive display – to serve content across multiple devices, screens, and browsers.
- o User experience- maintaining a satisfactory user experience throughout the website sections.
- o Accessibility – To any interested visitor in a user-friendly way across the website sections.
- o Retention- keeping visitors coming back to the website.
- o Links to relevant restricted access sites and virtual environments.

✓ The Visual identity for the RCGs is increasingly consolidated and visibility and understanding of the work by the RCGs is enhanced for the relevant stakeholder groups.

✓ A regularly updated Stakeholders' database improves the communication function among the RCGs' experts and the stakeholders' community.

✓ Internal communication protocols and help-desk in place makes it easier for any new comer to efficiently join, adopt responsibilities, and contribute to the RCGs objectives and work commitments.

(max 900 words per activity)

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Section V – References

FishPi2 Project Report, strengthening regional co-ordination in fisheries data collection, 2019

RCG. 2019. Regional Coordination Group North Atlantic and North Sea & Eastern Arctic. 114 pgs.
(<https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/docs/rcg>)

RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020. Regional Coordination Group North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic and Regional Coordination Group Baltic. 2020. Part I Report, 110 pgs. Part II Decisions and Recommendations, 7 pgs. Part III, Intersessional Subgroup (ISSG) 2019-2020 Reports, 154 pgs.
(<https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/docs/rcg>)

Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1004.

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Section VI – Annexes

Annex I. Scenarios developed during the project SECWEB (Section II.II)

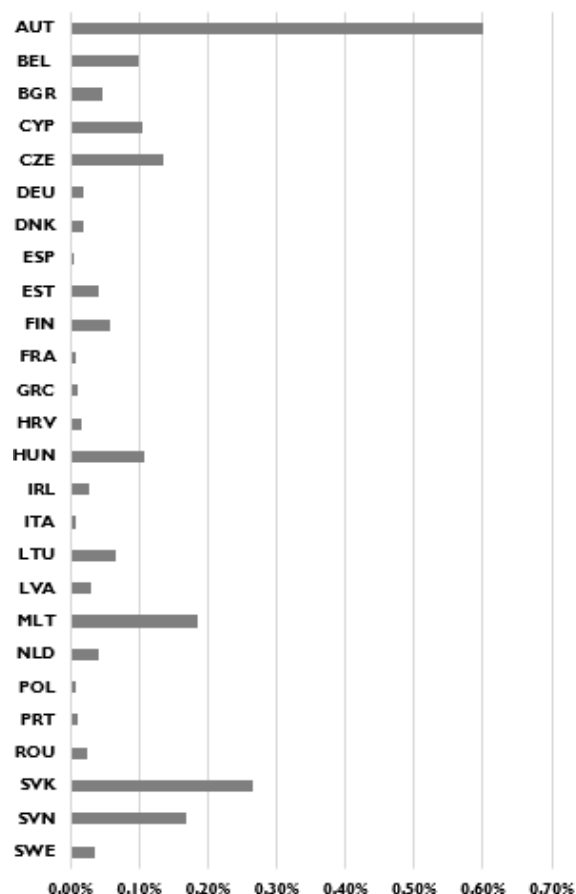
Table I. Scenario I - Flat rate scenario

Global resources from the EMFAF per Member State for the period from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2027 from ANNEX V of Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1004.								
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	TOTAL
TOTAL	649 646 302	867 704 926	833 435 808	798 047 503	707 757 512	721 531 085	732 876 864	5 311 000 000
BEL	4 925 394	6 578 640	6 318 823	6 050 521	5 365 973	5 470 400	5 556 420	40 266 171
BGR	10 390 512	13 878 165	13 330 060	12 764 057	11 319 949	11 540 245	11 721 710	84 944 698
CZE	3 670 269	4 902 222	4 708 614	4 508 683	3 998 577	4 076 392	4 140 492	30 005 249
DNK	24 582 747	32 834 129	31 537 379	30 198 278	26 781 687	27 302 881	27 732 208	200 969 309
DEU	25 908 996	34 605 542	33 238 833	31 827 487	28 226 569	28 775 883	29 228 372	211 811 682
EST	11 912 962	15 911 637	15 283 223	14 634 286	12 978 583	13 231 157	13 439 212	97 391 060
IRL	17 414 773	23 260 170	22 341 533	21 392 895	18 972 532	19 341 754	19 645 895	142 369 552
GRC	45 869 836	61 266 389	58 846 736	56 348 059	49 972 919	50 945 434	51 746 530	374 995 903
ESP	137 053 465	183 056 482	175 826 854	168 361 115	149 312 971	152 218 730	154 612 307	1 120 441 924
FRA	69 372 651	92 658 097	88 998 661	85 219 712	75 578 071	77 048 886	78 260 448	567 136 526
HRV	29 808 019	39 813 303	38 240 917	36 617 179	32 474 362	33 106 342	33 626 925	243 687 047
ITA	63 388 749	84 665 656	81 321 871	77 868 885	69 058 907	70 402 853	71 509 909	518 216 830
CYP	4 685 786	6 258 605	6 011 428	5 756 178	5 104 932	5 204 279	5 286 114	38 307 322
LVA	16 498 239	22 035 996	21 165 707	20 266 995	17 974 015	18 323 805	18 611 939	134 876 696
LTU	7 484 030	9 996 101	9 601 315	9 193 636	8 153 481	8 312 155	8 442 859	61 183 577
HUN	4 612 763	6 161 072	5 917 747	5 666 475	5 025 378	5 123 176	5 203 735	37 710 346
MLT	2 669 689	3 565 790	3 424 963	3 279 536	2 908 494	2 965 097	3 011 721	21 825 290
NLD	11 978 187	15 998 755	15 366 900	14 714 410	13 049 642	13 303 600	13 512 794	97 924 288
AUT	821 763	1 097 594	1 054 246	1 009 482	895 270	912 693	927 046	6 718 094
POL	62 675 756	83 713 340	80 407 168	76 993 019	68 282 136	69 610 965	70 705 569	512 387 953
PRT	46 307 271	61 850 651	59 407 923	56 885 418	50 449 481	51 431 271	52 240 007	378 572 022
ROU	19 871 141	26 541 038	25 492 826	24 410 382	21 648 625	22 069 926	22 416 967	162 450 905
SVN	2 927 095	3 909 597	3 755 191	3 595 743	3 188 925	3 250 985	3 302 105	23 929 641
SVK	1 862 388	2 487 512	2 389 271	2 287 821	2 028 980	2 068 465	2 100 991	15 225 428
FIN	8 777 254	11 723 405	11 260 401	10 782 276	9 562 384	9 748 476	9 901 766	71 755 962
SWE	14 176 567	18 935 038	18 187 218	17 414 975	15 444 669	15 745 235	15 992 823	115 896 525

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	Flat rate annual contribution by MS	Average annual EMFAF budget	Flat rate as a % from the average annual EMFAF budget
AUT	5769	959728	0.601%
BEL	5769	5752310	0.100%
BGR	5769	12134957	0.048%
CYP	5769	5472475	0.105%
CZE	5769	4286464	0.135%
DEU	5769	30258812	0.019%
DNK	5769	28709901	0.020%
ESP	5769	160063132	0.004%
EST	5769	13913009	0.041%
FIN	5769	10250852	0.056%
FRA	5769	81019504	0.007%
GRC	5769	53570843	0.011%
HRV	5769	34812435	0.017%
HUN	5769	5387192	0.107%
IRL	5769	20338507	0.028%
ITA	5769	74030976	0.008%
LTU	5769	8740511	0.066%
LVA	5769	19268099	0.030%
MLT	5769	3117899	0.185%
NLD	5769	13989184	0.041%
POL	5769	73198279	0.008%
PRT	5769	54081717	0.011%
ROU	5769	23207272	0.025%
SVK	5769	2175061	0.265%
SVN	5769	3418520	0.169%
SWE	5769	16556646	0.035%

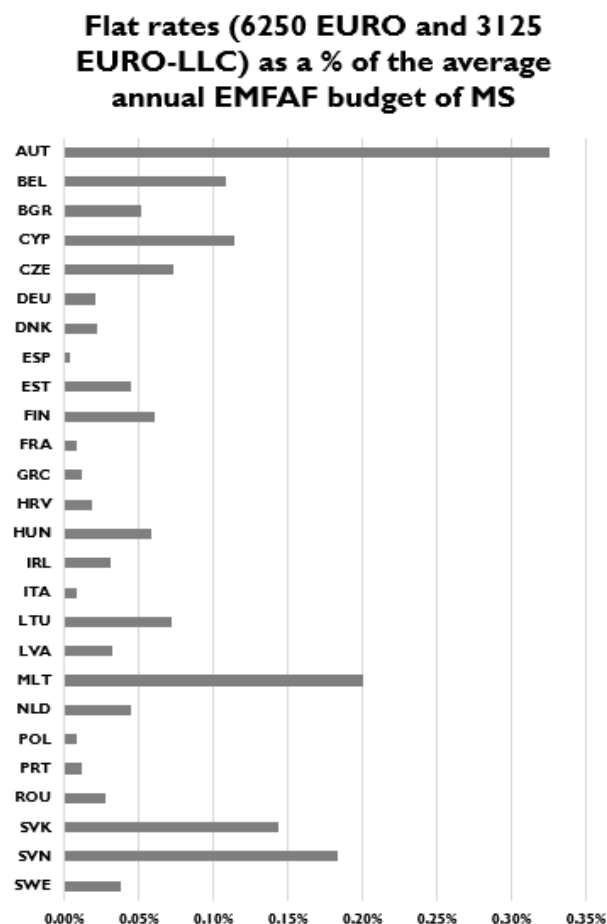
**Flat rate (5769 EURO) as a % of the
average annual EMFAF budget of MS**



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Table II. Scenario 2 - Flat rate scenario with lower annual contribution by the LLC

	Flat rate annual contribution by MS	Average annual EMFAF budget	Flat rates as a % from the average annual EMFAF budget
AUT	3125	959728	0.326%
BEL	6250	5752310	0.109%
BGR	6250	12134957	0.052%
CYP	6250	5472475	0.114%
CZE	3125	4286464	0.073%
DEU	6250	30258812	0.021%
DNK	6250	28709901	0.022%
ESP	6250	160063132	0.004%
EST	6250	13913009	0.045%
FIN	6250	10250852	0.061%
FRA	6250	81019504	0.008%
GRC	6250	53570843	0.012%
HRV	6250	34812435	0.018%
HUN	3125	5387192	0.058%
IRL	6250	20338507	0.031%
ITA	6250	74030976	0.008%
LTU	6250	8740511	0.072%
LVA	6250	19268099	0.032%
MLT	6250	3117899	0.200%
NLD	6250	13989184	0.045%
POL	6250	73198279	0.009%
PRT	6250	54081717	0.012%
ROU	6250	23207272	0.027%
SVK	3125	2175061	0.144%
SVN	6250	3418520	0.183%
SWE	6250	16556646	0.038%



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Table III. Scenario 3 - according to the annual contribution by MS according to the total EMFAF budget for the period 2021-2027

	TOTAL EMFAF budget for 2021- 2027	%	Annual contribution per MS (% x 150000 EURO)
AUT	6718094	0.13%	190
BEL	40266171	0.76%	1137
BGR	84944698	1.60%	2399
CYP	38307322	0.72%	1082
CZE	30005249	0.56%	847
DEU	211811682	3.99%	5982
DNK	200969309	3.78%	5676
ESP	1120441924	21.10%	31645
EST	97391060	1.83%	2751
FIN	71755962	1.35%	2027
FRA	567136526	10.68%	16018
GRC	374995903	7.06%	10591
HRV	243687047	4.59%	6883
HUN	37710346	0.71%	1065
IRL	142369552	2.68%	4021
ITA	518216830	9.76%	14636
LTU	61183577	1.15%	1728
LVA	134876696	2.54%	3809
MLT	21825290	0.41%	616
NLD	97924288	1.84%	2766
POL	512387953	9.65%	14472
PRT	378572022	7.13%	10692
ROU	162450905	3.06%	4588
SVK	15225428	0.29%	430
SVN	23929641	0.45%	676
SWE	115896525	2.18%	3273

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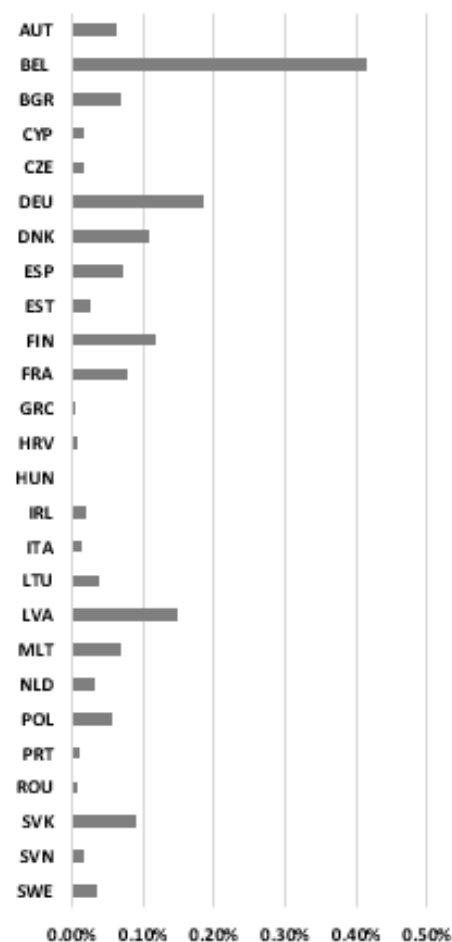
Table IV. Scenario 4 - according to the number of RCGs in which each MS is participating

	RCG Baltic	RCG Med&BS	RCG NANSEA	RCG LDF	RCG LP	RCG ECON	Total
BEL							2
BGR							2
CZE							1
DNK							3
DEU							4
EST							4
IRL							3
GRC							3
ESP							5
FRA							4
HRV							3
ITA							4
CYP							3
LVA							4
LTU							4
HUN							1
MLT							3
NLD							3
AUT							1
POL							4
PRT							4
ROU							2
SVN							2
SVK							1
FIN							2
SWE							3
	8	10	13	9	9	26	<u>75</u>

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	Total number or RCGs in which MS is participating	Annual contribution per MS (150 000 EURO / 75 x number of RCGs)	Average annual EMFAF budget	Annual contribution as a % from the average annual EMFAF budget
AUT	1	2000	3117899	0.064%
BEL	2	4000	959728	0.417%
BGR	2	4000	5752310	0.070%
CYP	3	6000	34812435	0.017%
CZE	1	2000	12134957	0.016%
DEU	4	8000	4286464	0.187%
DNK	3	6000	5472475	0.110%
ESP	5	10000	13913009	0.072%
EST	4	8000	30258812	0.026%
FIN	2	4000	3418520	0.117%
FRA	4	8000	10250852	0.078%
GRC	3	6000	160063132	0.004%
HRV	3	6000	81019504	0.007%
HUN	1	2000	74030976	0.003%
IRL	3	6000	28709901	0.021%
ITA	4	8000	53570843	0.015%
LTU	4	8000	20338507	0.039%
LVA	4	8000	5387192	0.149%
MLT	3	6000	8740511	0.069%
NLD	3	6000	19268099	0.031%
POL	4	8000	13989184	0.057%
PRT	4	8000	73198279	0.011%
ROU	2	4000	54081717	0.007%
SVK	1	2000	2175061	0.092%
SVN	2	4000	23207272	0.017%
SWE	3	6000	16556646	0.036%

Annual contribution as a % from the average annual EMFAF budget



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Table V. Scenario 5 – 3-component scenario, which was presented to the NC and was commented during the NC meeting in September 2022

	% from EMFAF budget	Annual contribution by MS according to the total EMFAF budget for the period 2021-2027
BEL	0.76%	398
BGR	1.60%	840
CZE	0.56%	297
DNK	3.78%	1987
DEU	3.99%	2094
EST	1.83%	963
IRL	2.68%	1407
GRC	7.06%	3707
ESP	21.10%	11076
FRA	10.68%	5606
HRV	4.59%	2409
ITA	9.76%	5123
CYP	0.72%	379
LVA	2.54%	1333
LTU	1.15%	605
HUN	0.71%	373
MLT	0.41%	216
NLD	1.84%	968
AUT	0.13%	66
POL	9.65%	5065
PRT	7.13%	3742
ROU	3.06%	1606
SVN	0.45%	237
SVK	0.29%	151
FIN	1.35%	709
SWE	2.18%	1146

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Complexity rate	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	
MS	RCG Baltic	RCG Med&BS	RCG NANSEA	RCG LDF	RCG LP	RCG ECON	Total
BEL							2
BGR							2
CZE							1
DNK							3
DEU							4
EST							4
IRL							3
GRC							3
ESP							5
FRA							4
HRV							3
ITA							4
CYP							3
LVA							4
LTU							4
HUN							1
MLT							3
NLD							3
AUT							1
POL							4
PRT							4
ROU							2
SVN							2
SVK							1
FIN							2
SWE							3
Total	8	10	13	9	9	26	75

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52500	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	
MS	RCG Baltic	RCG Med&BS	RCG NANSEA	RCG LDF	RCG LP	RCG ECON	TOTAL per MS
BEL	0	0	807.69	0	0	403.85	1212
BGR	0	1575.00	0	0	0	403.85	1979
CZE	0	0	0	0	0	403.85	404
DNK	656.25	0	807.69	0	0	403.85	1868
DEU	656.25	0	807.69	583.33	0	403.85	2451
EST	656.25	0	807.69	583.33	0	403.85	2451
IRL	0	0	807.69	0	583.33	403.85	1795
GRC	0	1575.00	0	0	583.33	403.85	2562
ESP	0	1575.00	807.69	583.33	583.33	403.85	3953
FRA	0	1575.00	807.69	0	583.33	403.85	3370
HRV	0	1575.00	0	0	583.33	403.85	2562
ITA	0	1575.00	0	583.33	583.33	403.85	3146
CYP	0	1575.00	0	0	583.33	403.85	2562
LVA	656.25	0	807.69	583.33	0	403.85	2451
LTU	656.25	0	807.69	583.33	0	403.85	2451
HUN	0	0	0	0	0	403.85	404
MLT	0	1575.00	0	0	583.33	403.85	2562
NLD	0	0	807.69	583.33	0	403.85	1795
AUT	0	0	0	0	0	403.85	404
POL	656.25	0	807.69	583.33	0	403.85	2451
PRT	0	0	807.69	583.33	583.33	403.85	2378
ROU	0	1575.00	0	0	0	403.85	1979
SVN	0	1575.00	0	0	0	403.85	1979
SVK	0	0	0	0	0	403.85	404
FIN	656.25	0	0	0	0	403.85	1060
SWE	656.25	0	807.69	0	0	403.85	1868
TOTAL	5250	15750	10500	5250	5250	10500	

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	Annual contribution by MS according to the total EMFAF budget for the period 2021-2027	Annual contribution by MS according number of RCGs in which each MS is participating	TOTAL MS annual contribution
BEL	398	1212	1610
BGR	840	1979	2819
CZE	297	404	700
DNK	1987	1868	3854
DEU	2094	2451	4545
EST	963	2451	3414
IRL	1407	1795	3202
GRC	3707	2562	6269
ESP	11076	3953	15029
FRA	5606	3370	8976
HRV	2409	2562	4971
ITA	5123	3146	8268
CYP	379	2562	2941
LVA	1333	2451	3784
LTU	605	2451	3056
HUN	373	404	777
MLT	216	2562	2778
NLD	968	1795	2763
AUT	66	404	470
POL	5065	2451	7516
PRT	3742	2378	6120
ROU	1606	1979	3585
SVN	237	1979	2215
SVK	151	404	554
FIN	709	1060	1769
SWE	1146	1868	3013

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Table VI. Scenario 6 – 2-component scenario: this scenario was not presented to the NC and was calculated because the EC participation in scenario 5 is hypothetical and not confirmed.

	Annual contribution by MS according to the total EMFAF budget for the period 2021-2027	Annual contribution by MS according number of RCGs in which each MS is participating	TOTAL MS annual contribution
BEL	569	1731	2299
BGR	1200	2827	4026
CZE	424	577	1001
DNK	2838	2668	5506
DEU	2991	3502	6493
EST	1375	3502	4877
IRL	2010	2564	4575
GRC	5296	3660	8956
ESP	15822	5647	21470
FRA	8009	4814	12823
HRV	3441	3660	7102
ITA	7318	4494	11812
CYP	541	3660	4201
LVA	1905	3502	5406
LTU	864	3502	4366
HUN	533	577	1109
MLT	308	3660	3968
NLD	1383	2564	3947
AUT	95	577	672
POL	7236	3502	10737
PRT	5346	3397	8743
ROU	2294	2827	5121
SVN	338	2827	3165
SVK	215	577	792
FIN	1013	1514	2528
SWE	1637	2668	4305

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Annex II. Short operational plan (Section IV.I)

MS feedback on Secretariat's short-term funding

Questions overview

Despite the efforts to find a common administrative procedure for all MS for the long-term funding of the Secretariat some questions still remain. In order to proceed gather MS's feedback on the following:

1. How much is the **financial limit** for a **direct service contract** in your country?
2. Is it feasible for your organisation to **formalise a direct service contract** for more than one year for the Secretariat Support service?
 - 2.1. What is the **time-frame limit** for this in case it exists?
 - 2.2. How much is the **financial limit** for a direct service contract without open procedure in your country?
3. Is there in your national administration **any special requirement for foreign service providers (within the EU)**? If yes, could you:
 - 3.1 Please explain what they are (and legal references to it)
 - 3.2 What are possible solutions for having services from another EU member state to your national administration?
4. Normally for **public institutions** there is need to gather **three offers from different potential providers** for a minor service contract. Are there exceptions to this rule foreseen by law in your country (e.g. a limit to the budget)?

If so, could you please explain if you consider this could apply for the Secretariat given the service description provided, the background and the need for all the network to go for a common service provider?
5. Can your country have the **service contract** for the Secretariat services **in forced from 1st January 2023**?

If not, when do you think it will be feasible to have the contract in force?

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MS's feedback question by question

Question 1: **How much is the financial limit for a direct service contract in your country?**

BEL	
BGR	BGN 30 000 (aprox. EUR 15 400) excl. VAT. /according to Art. 20, para. 3, item 3 of the Public procurement act/.
CZE	The question remains, is it about providing services in the form of direct purchase? Will there be an object with a legal personality from which it will be possible to purchase the mentioned service? If we look at it as a direct purchase according to the Act on Public Procurement and the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries, then it is up to CZK 500 000 (EUR 20 000) for a subsidized contractor and CZK 2 million (EUR 80 000) for non-subsidized ones (up to 50% support included).
DNK	If the service contract is below EUR 6 500 annually we directly sign it. If it is above we need to have two offers.
DEU	EUR 1 000
EST	NO LIMIT when using a derogation in public procurement act that may allow to bypass public procurement procedure.
IRL	We are planning to use a derogation in our public procurement act that will allow us to bypass public procurement procedure. When using the derogation there is no financial limits to the contract sum. Our national public procurement act is available also in English (https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/525082022001/consolide) and we plan to use derogation described in §11 (1) p6: "The contracting authority or entity is not required to apply this Act where: 6) a public contract or a design contest is co-financed for the most part by an international organisation or international financing institution and the parties have agreed on applicable procurement procedures;"
GRC	EUR 30 000 , for a closed procedure
ESP	EUR 14 999 (excl. VAT), according to Spanish law
FRA	Given the amount requested (EUR 8 000 to EUR 12 000) for France, we can set a contract directly with the selected service that will ensure the secretariat, without going through 3 offers.
HRV	Ministry of Agriculture of Republic of Croatia is the body designated to implement DCF. Pursuant to Art. 7 of the currently valid Ordinance of simple procurement procedure, procurement of goods, works and services of the Ministry of Agriculture, simple procurement whose estimated value is less than HRK 100.000,00 (EUR 13 272,28) excluding VAT, can be carried out by sending a call for an offer to one subject.
ITA	EUR 139 000 up to the 30 of June 2023, after that it could come back to EUR 40 000
CYP	EUR 5 000
LVA	There is no financial limit for a direct service contract.
LTU	In Lithuania procurement procedures is applicable in public sector. Until apr. EUR 10 000 we can apply for simple procedure According to the table, contribution from Lithuania is 5653,04 (correct me, if I am mistaken). So, it is possible to apply for the simple procurement procedure in that case.
HUN	In case of entering into a "normal market" contract public procurement rules apply, no other limits exist.
MLT	Direct Contracts valued more than EUR 10 000 and just below EUR 140 000 may in exceptional cases be procured through a direct contract by Contracting Authority upon obtaining the prior written approval of the Minister (for Finance) who may delegate his authority in writing to the Permanent Secretary or any other Senior Official in his Ministry.
NLD	EUR 215 000 as the limit for the total amount (based on EU regulation). For a multi-year contract, the yearly limit is 1/4 of 215k=> EUR 53 750 = p/year for four years . The anticipated Dutch

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	contribution is well under this limit. Should the total budget be considered, a minimum of three offers are required. The best option would be to have a dedicated contract for the support of the Netherlands. The following answers are based on the assumption of the Dutch contribution only.
AUT	No reply to the questions, find provided explanation in last section of this doc
POL	Formally there is No limit , However, in practice the financial limit is determined by the EMFAF funds available to POL to cover all DCF activities (data collection, coordination, secretariat service etc...)
PRT	The limit is EUR 5.000 (artigo 128.º do CCP)
ROU	According to the latest amendments adopted in matters of public procurement, the Contracting Authority has the right to directly purchase products or services if the estimated value of the purchase, without VAT, is less than LEI 270 120 lei (EUR 54 000 euro), respectively works, if the estimated value of the purchase, without VAT, is less than LEI 900 400 lei (EUR 180 000).
SVN	For ordering goods, services and works, the value of which is lower than EUR 2,000.00 without VAT
SVK	No limit - § 81 direct negotiation procedure and § 1 par. 2 - 12 ZVO, § 1 par. 13 to 140,000 or 215,000 euros, § 1 par. 14 up to 300,000 euros, § 1 par. 15 to 10,000 euros direct entry/year.
FIN	Financial limit is EUR 60 000 .
SWE	700 000 SEK (→ 30/09/22 SEK 700 000 = EUR 74 037)

Question 2: **Is it feasible for your organisation to formalise a direct service contract for more than one year for the Secretariat Support service?**

2.1 What is the time-frame limit for this in case it exists?

2.2 How much is the financial limit for a direct service contract without open procedure in your country?

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	Q - 2.1 – time limit	Q -2.2 - € limit
BEL		We need three offers
BGR	According to Art. 113, para. 1 of the Public procurement act "The public procurement contracts for periodic or long term fulfillment shall be signed for a term, which shall not exceed 5 years ."	The financial limit for a direct service contract in Bulgaria is up to BGN 30,000 (EUR 15 398) excluding VAT. /according to Art. 20, para. 3, item 3 of the Public procurement act.
CZE	Neither the Public Procurement Act nor our Rules impose a maximum duration of the contract . However, this must be further consulted with public procurement experts (specialist department at the Ministry of Agriculture) or lawyers. We need more time, please.	The limit is up to 2 million CZK (EUR 80 000). (Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries).
DNK	The EMFAF funding for data collection in Denmark is based on a contract for 2021-2023. We expect the next contract will be for 2024-2027. This means that we can sign a contract for 2023 and another for 2024-2027 when the contract with the Danish managing authority for that period is signed.	See our answer to 1. Otherwise if the amount is larger it is around EUR 65 000
DEU	We can conclude contracts up to 4 years . We have to make a forecast. If, for example, it is clear that an order is to be awarded on a	We have to note that we have to hand over all transactions above EUR 25 000 net to central federal procurement.

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	permanent basis, the costs must also be considered beyond the four years.	We cannot carry out any open procedures internally at Thünen, as these relate to the upper threshold area. The central federal procurement is responsible for this area.
EST	Yes, the contract can last longer than one year. The contract must follow the financing period of the money used . As the EMFAF money will be involved, there will not be problem with the 3-year contract period (at least not for the first period).	With the use of public procurement derogation, we do not face any monetary limits with this service.
IRL	Time frame limit is usually dependent on the cost of the overall contract	Technically there is no financial limit for this type of contract in Ireland. A direct service contract without open procedure would require internal approval from Marine Institute management.
	<i>A direct service contract without open procedure would require internal approval from Marine Institute management</i>	
GRC	In general, it is 3 Years	EUR 30 000 euro for a closed process
ESP	The time-frame limit for a direct service contract in Spain is 1 year, with no extensions . Limitation on the execution of a new contract with the same content the following year, since it is understood that if there is a multiannual need, a multiannual contract must be formalized	EUR 14 999 excluding VAT
FRA		Given the amount requested (EUR 8 000 to EUR 12 000) for France, we can set a contract directly with the selected service that will ensure the secretariat, without going through 3 offers.
HRV	We can enter into a contract for a longer period if it is defined as such in the annual procurement plan of the Ministry	On an annual basis, the financial limit is less than HRK 100.000,00 (EUR 13 272,28) excluding VAT.
ITA	No time frame limit but the duration must be specified in the contract but no longer than 9 years .	Up EUR 139 000 there can be a restricted invitation to at least five operators
CYP	There is not a time limit , as long as you do not exceed the financial limit (EUR 5 000)	It is only possible if the financial limit of EUR 5 000 is not exceeded, otherwise it will be considered a partition and it is not allowed according to the relevant legislation on public procurements.
LVA	Normally it is no longer than 5 years	Starting from EUR 10 000 open tender should be organized. However, starting from EUR 1001 we should choose the offer with the lowest price – what is obtained from information from least two potential providers
LTU		Until apr. 10 000 Euro we can apply for simple procedure (in that case we need three offers from the potential providers, simple form of agreement can be signed between The Ministry of Agriculture and provider)

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		According to the table, contribution from Lithuania is EUR 5 653,04 (correct me, if I am mistaken). So, it is possible to apply for the simple procurement procedure in that case.
HUN		Between HUF 1 000 000.0 (approx. EUR 2 500.) and HUF 15 000 000 (approx. EUR 37 000 EUR) three offers are needed. Over 15 000 000.0 HUF public procurement is needed.
MLT	There isn't any time frame limit , just a date for the deadline of services has to be indicated in the procurement document and contract agreement.	< EUR 134 999.99 (exceptional cases)
NLD	Yes, though dedicated to the support of the Netherlands	
	2 weeks after receiving the offer	EUR 70 000 , though one formal offer for the work is required for contracts less than 70,000.
AUT	No reply to the questions, find provided explanation in last section of this doc	
POL	I believe the time-frame limit is directly connected to the duration of EMFAF (until 2027).	Formally there is no limit , However, in practice the financial limit is determined by the EMFAF funds available to POL to cover all DCF activities (data collection, coordination, secretariat service etc...)
PRT	3 years	Without open a public procedure by direct adjustment it is possible to pay till EUR 20 000 (art.º 20.º, n.º I, alínea d) do CCP)
ROU	<p>The time limit for a regular service contract is established by art 165 of HG 395/2016 which stipulates the following:</p> <p>(I) The contracting authority has the right to extend the duration of regular supply or service contracts concluded in the previous year and whose normal performance period expires on December 31, if the following conditions are met cumulatively :</p> <p>a) in the award documentation, drawn up on the occasion of awarding the initial contract, the possibility of supplementing the quantities of products and services already purchased, as well as the maximum level up to which such supplement will be possible, were foreseen;</p> <p>b) in the award documentation, as well as in the contract, a clause is explicitly provided by which the right of the contracting authority to opt for supplementing the quantities of products or services is conditioned by the existence of the financial resources allocated for this purpose;</p> <p>c) the estimated value of the initial contract was determined by taking into account the option in which the contracting authority opts for supplementing the maximum amount of products or services;</p>	<p>According to the latest amendments adopted in matters of public procurement, the Contracting Authority has the right to directly purchase products or services if the estimated value of the purchase, without VAT, is less than LEI 270 120 (EUR 54 000), respectively works, if the estimated value of the purchase, without VAT, is less than LEI 900 400 (EUR 180 000).</p>

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	<p>d) the extension of the initial contract cannot exceed a duration of 4 months from the date of expiry of the initial period of its fulfilment.</p> <p>For service contracts that have a duration of more than one year, there is the possibility of concluding a framework agreement and awarding several subsequent contracts based on it.</p> <p>The duration of a framework agreement cannot exceed 4 years, except for exceptional cases that the contracting authority thoroughly justifies, especially by the subject of the respective framework agreement.</p> <p>However, a framework agreement cannot be concluded following a direct procurement procedure, it being allowed only after the following procedures have been carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the open tender; b) restricted tender; c) competitive negotiation; d) competitive dialogue; e) partnership for innovation; f) negotiation without prior publication; g) the solution competition; h) the award procedure applicable in the case of social services and other specific services; i) simplified procedure.
SVN	2- Is it feasible for your organisation to formalise a direct service contract for more than one year for the Secretariat Support service? No
SVK	<p>No time limit, but it must be for services falling under the above exceptions.</p> <p>A framework agreement that can be concluded for a maximum of four years, except in exceptional cases.</p> <p>No limit - § 81 direct negotiation procedure and § 1 par. 2 - 12 ZVO, § 1 par. 13 to 140,000 or 215,000 euros, § 1 par. 14 up to 300,000 euros, § 1 par. 15 to 10,000 euros direct entry/year.</p>
FIN	<p>Practice is that a contract is made for four years, in principal it can be longer</p> <p>See reply to question 1., EUR 60 000</p>
SWE	<p>In fact, no actual time-frame limit exists, but it is not possible to split the contract in several smaller, so that each amount falls below the financial limit</p> <p>SEK 1 456 476 (→ 30/09/22 SEK 1 456 476 = EUR 130 063)</p>

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Question 3: Is there in your national administration any special requirement for foreign service providers (within the EU)? If yes, could you:

3.1 Please explain what they are (and legal references to it)

3.2 What are possible solutions for having services from another EU member state to your national administration?

BEL

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BGR	<p>The requirements that exist are in case the amount is more than BGN 30,000 (EUR 15 398) and there will be a public procurement. If a public procurement is expected, we will provide a detailed list of requirements that the potential candidate must meet.</p> <p>All requirements which the potential candidate should meet are listed in the Public procurement act, but they are relevant only in case there is public procurement.</p> <p>According to Art. 58, para. 3 of the Public procurement act, when the participant selected as an executor of a public procurement is a foreign person, he submits documents, issued by a competent authority, according to the legislation of the country in which the participant is established. If there is a need to provide this list, we will send it later on.</p>
CZE	We need more time, please. This should be consulted with public procurement experts or lawyers.
DNK	No
DEU	We can write to three potential bidders for up to EUR 25 000 , regardless of where the bidder is located.
EST	<p>We will need a legal base for making the transactions when the bill arrives. So, if we will have the decision made by all the MS in RCG Decision Meeting (including agreement text with all the details of how all MS are contributing and what services are involved), and agreement/contract between Estonian Ministry of the Environment and Secretariat, that will describe the details (yearly fixed amount, what for, to whom ect) of the service, signed, then there should not be any additional requirements from our side.</p>
IRL	No
GRC	<p>Only what is provided by the EU Legislation.</p> <p>There are no restrictions as far as the EU Member States is concerned</p>
ESP	No
FRA	No reply to the questions but explanation of cost-sharing agreement (see last section of this doc)
HRV	There are no special requirements for foreign service providers in terms of contracting. They must meet all the conditions prescribed by the procurement documentation.
ITA	No there isn't
CYP	No
LVA	No
LTU	
HUN	No. The contract shall be concluded with the beneficiary of the next DCF call in the frame of the new Hungarian fisheries operational program. The call shall enable the conclusion of a contract or may even require it from the beneficiary to conclude it.
MLT	No, if the service providers send the necessary documents listed in the procurement document
NLD	No
AUT	No reply to the questions, find provided explanation in last section of this doc
POL	<p>NO</p> <p>In case the secretariat services are included in POL WP accepted by COM Decision (and it will be) this is a formal basis for POL to cover our fee for these services.</p>
PRT	<p>No</p> <p>There are no special rules for contracting services provided by foreigners</p> <p>It is always possible to hire foreign services, there is free competition in public procurement</p>
ROU	Not. But it is preferable for foreign service providers to have an account opened in the Electronic System for Public Procurement.
SVN	No
SVK	It does not exist
FIN	Service provider cannot be under the sanctions of the UN implemented in EU (e.g. Council decision 2022/1313)

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SWE No

Question 4: **Normally for public institutions there is need to gather three offers from different potential providers for a minor service contract. Are there exceptions to this rule foreseen by law in your country (e.g a limit to the budget?**

If so, could you please explain if you consider this could apply for the Secretariat given the service description provided, the background and the need for all the network to go for a common service provider.

BEL	
BGR	In case the total value for the performance of all services subject to the contract does not exceed BGN 30 000 (approx. EUR 15 400) excl. VAT, it is possible to conclude a contract with a specific supplier . There is no requirement in the PPA to collect a certain number of offers in case of a direct award.
CZE	Here we see an obstacle. In a closed call, the contracting authority invites at least 3 suppliers to submit a bid. The contracting authority will invite only such suppliers that it has information that they are capable of providing the required performance. The contracting authority may not invite the same group of suppliers repeatedly unless it is justified by the subject of the contract or other special circumstances, or by the cancellation of the previous tender.
DNK	See our answer to I
DEU	According to national procurement law, there is the possibility to award contracts by way of negotiation with or without participation competition. In our opinion, the question also alludes to the point of uniqueness. A unique selling proposition exists if a product can only be manufactured by one company due to its nature or if only one company sells the corresponding product on the market. The unique selling proposition therefore relates primarily to companies in the case of delivery services. If they are the only ones on the market who manufacture or sell the corresponding product, there is a unique selling point. Prerequisites for affirming a unique selling proposition based on the nature of the product are that the product is generally necessary, that it has a technical feature and that this technical feature is also necessary. In the case of a SERVICE, a technical argument is required to justify a unique position of a market participant. An INDISPENSABLE PREREQUISITE for the application of the exception is that the client has up-to-date knowledge of the market , which must be documented by a comprehensive and careful analysis . Based on the market analysis, the objective conclusion must be justified that there is de facto only one company for the requested service. Mere considerations of expediency or purely economic reasons cannot justify the negotiation award with only one bidder. It is therefore not sufficient if the client only subjectively concludes that only a specific company can be expected to provide an economic service. The proximity of a company to the place of performance is also irrelevant. So if a facility carries out an award and aims for a unique position for a service, the market research results and documents should form the basis of the decision and be presented transparently.
EST	As we plan to use the derogation foreseen in public procurement act, then there is no need for the three offers from different potential providers.
IRL	We can specify that the service is only available from the secretariat and will complete a sole supplier approval document for our financial department

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GRC	For the direct service contract, it is not necessary to comply with the procedure of three (3) tenders . It can be directly with a provider, as long as the threshold of EUR 30 000 is respected.
ESP	Yes, it's necessary to gather at least 3 offers from different providers. The only exception is to demonstrate the impossibility of obtaining a bid from three different suppliers . We believe that this exception could be applied since we consider that currently, due to the difficulty of the dynamics and the specificity of the project, there would be no other supplier with the capacity to perform the tasks that CETMAR has performed.
FRA	Given the amount requested (EUR 8 000 to EUR 12 000) for France, we can set a contract directly with the selected service that will ensure the secretariat, without going through 3 offers.
HRV	Pursuant to Art. 8 paragraph 2 of the aforementioned Ordinance, for goods, works and services with an estimated value of equal or more than HRK 100.000,00 (EUR 13.272,28) excluding VAT and less than HRK 200.000,00 (EUR 26 544,56) excluding VAT on a yearly basis, the invitation to submit offers can be sent to a smaller number of business entities than those prescribed in Art. 8 paragraph 1 (at least three) of the same Ordinance, however this needs to be justified and approved by the Minister.
ITA	Up EUR 139 000 there can be a restricted invitation to at least five operators
CYP	
LVA	Yes, we need at least two offers from different potential providers, if the amount is higher than EUR 1001 . Exceptions to this rule are contracts below EUR 1001. To get the possibility to pay for Secretariat (in our case around 3000-4000 eur) we will need two offers from different potential providers.
LTU	We need three offers from the potential providers.
HUN	Under HUF 1 000 000 (approx. EUR 2 500), 3 offers are not needed , and if there is a good reason, i.e., no one else has the required quality for the task/service, it is possible to dispense with the offers. A declaration from the direct service provider or from the COM to support this statement, i.e., that there is no one else providing this specific service shall be needed. If the COM could make some kind of instructions/recommendations for member states on joining the secretariat would be also helpful.

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MLT	<p>Three hand quotations are applied to a financial limit of EUR 5 000. When exceeding that, the procurement document should be uploaded on the Electronic Public Procurement System (e-PPS)</p> <p>These justifications are being conveniently reproduced to highlight the circumstances when direct service contract may be used:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> When no tenders or no suitable tenders or no applications have been submitted in response to an open procedure; When for technical or artistic reasons, or for reasons connected with the protection of exclusive rights, the services may be provided only by a particular economic operator; Where the contract concerned is awarded subsequent to a design contest and must be awarded to the successful candidate or to one of the successful candidates; In so far as is strictly necessary, when the time-limits for open, restricted or negotiated procedures referred to in the Public Procurement Regulations cannot be respected for reasons of extreme urgency occasioned by unforeseeable events. The circumstances invoked to justify urgency must not be attributable to the contracting authority; <p>2) e) In so far as is strictly necessary, for additional supplies, services and/or works not included in the project initially considered or in the contract first concluded but which have, through unforeseen circumstances, become necessary for the performance of the service or works or supplies described therein, on condition that the award is made to the economic operator executing the contract.</p>
NLD	Only one offer is required as long as the total amount doesn't exceed EUR 70 000 .
AUT	No reply to the questions, find provided explanation in last section of this doc
POL	I do not foresee a need for a formal procedure in POL to have a service contract signed. Including the secretariat services in POL WP accepted by COM Decision shall be sufficient basis for contract and fees paid. Ideally, it would be desired to have an agreement signed by all MS involved on setting the secretariat. In such an agreement we could for example have a provision that Spain is elected as a leader in the procedure for setting the RCGs Secretariat on behalf of all MS involved and then the provider for RCGs Secretariat shall be selected in accordance to the procedures in force in Spain.
PRT	If we are dealing with the figure of the preliminary consultation provided for in article 35.º-A of the CCP, it is in fact necessary to consult 3 entities before launching the direct award tender procedure (up to EUR 20 000)
ROU	<p>In the case of direct acquisition, the contracting authority:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> has the obligation to use the electronic catalogue made available by SEAP or to publish an announcement in a dedicated section of its own website or that of SEAP, accompanied by the description of the products, services or works to be purchased, for purchases whose estimated value is greater than LEI 200 000 (approx. EUR 40 450), excl. VAT, for products and services, respectively LEI 560 000 (approx. EUR 113 265), excluding VAT, for works; has the obligation to consult at least three economic operators for purchases whose estimated value is greater than LEI 140 000 (approx. EUR 28 300), excl. VAT, for products and services, respectively LEI 300 000 (approx. EUR 60 678), excl. VAT, for works, but less than or equal to the mentioned value to lit. a); if, following the consultation, the contracting authority receives only a valid offer from the point of view of the requested requirements, the purchase can be made; has the right to purchase based on a single offer if the estimated value of the purchase is less than or equal to LEI 140 000 (approx. EUR 28 300), excl. VAT, for products and services, respectively LEI 300 000 (approx. EUR 60 678), excl. VAT, for works; has the right to pay directly, based on the legal commitment, without prior acceptance of an offer, if the estimated value of the purchase is less than LEI 9 000 (approx. EUR 1 820), excl. VAT.

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SVN	For ordering goods, services and works, the value of which is lower than EUR 2,000.00 without VAT
SVK	It can be used e.g. expert opinion, determination of maximum limits, but this does not apply to the limitation of the procedure, but only to the verification of economy. Central public procurement can be used for several entities for the same subject of the contract.
FIN	Minor service contract limit is EUR 30 000 . Some conditions may be applied leading to a lower limit than 30 000, likely not to be relevant here
SWE	It is not statutory but is stated in the internal routines of the agency responsible for DCF (SwAM; Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management)

Question 5: Can your country have the service contract for the Secretariat services in force from 1st January 2023?

If not, when do you think it will be feasible to have the contract in force?

BEL	A contract from 1st January 2023 is feasible, but to have this in place, we would need to sign by mid-december.
BGR	Yes, it is possible
CZE	We need more time, please. We would have to know what kind of contract it is and consult with the lawyers.
DNK	Yes
DEU	Since the construct has not yet been finally clarified, it does not seem possible or realistic to conclude a service contract here by 1 Jan 2023. Please note that the total sum over a period of four years must be taken into account when awarding the grant. From EUR25 000, the award must be processed via our central federal procurement, whereby the processing time for national procedures in the below-threshold area takes between 4 and 6 months, in the upper-threshold area between 6 and 9 months.
EST	I principle yes, if the decision is made in RCG DM, but we are unable to sign the agreement/service contract before the 1 st of January. There is an option to sign the contract later on the year, but the financial support period could still start at 1 st of January 2023.
IRL	Yes
GRC	It might be possible, but we still need time to address this matter with all the contracting parties, in order to finalize the source of the funding (DCF, National Contribution etc)
ESP	Yes. But it will last on a mandatory basis on December 31 st 2022 and it may not be extended.
FRA	A contract from 1st January 2023 seems feasible. but will need to be signed by mid-december.
HRV	If it is a simple procurement procedure and the same is defined in the annual procurement plan of the Ministry, it should be possible to carry out a simple procurement procedure and have a contract until January 1, 2023. This also depends on specificities of the actual procurement procedure and documentation, following the approval of the National Work Plan by the Commission.
ITA	No This administration is reviewing suitable legal options for funding the secretariat service.

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CYP	If the service contract is for one year and its value is below EUR 5 000, Cyprus can have the Secretariat services in forced from 1 st January 2023.
LVA	If we would manage to receive two offers, there is no problem to start from 1st January.
LTU	
HUN	If the new DCF call in Hungary will be announced before 1 st January 2023, it is possible.
MLT	It should be possible; however, this depends on the availability of the source funding (EMFAF).
NLD	Yes
AUT	No reply to the questions, find provided explanation in last section of this doc
POL	YES
PRT	If we are dealing with a simplified direct adjustment, it is easy, but if we are thinking of making a direct adjustment up to EUR 20 000 with a public tender procedure, the internal procedure (PT DSAG/DSJ-I) will have to be carried out, and depending on priorities and financial availability, it is possible to proceed with the contracting until the indicated date.
ROU	Yes, if the steps to carry out the public procurement are undertaken in a timely manner, subject to the existence of the financial resources allocated for this purpose
SVN	Yes
SVK	We don't know the answer.
FIN	In principle, the contract could be in force from 1 January 2023.
SWE	I do hope so

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Other comments and feedback received

BEL	
BGR	
CZE	
DNK	
DEU	
EST	
IRL	
GRC	
ESP	<p>We strongly believe that this form of financing is not the most appropriate one. This way of financing the secretariat of this body is not adequate and may lead to difficulties of coordination and financing in the near future. We urge the commission to enable a way to channel the funds through the EU budget. In this way, each state could earmark funds for this purpose through a voluntary/mandatory contribution.</p> <p>Spain can contractually cover its share of the secretariat's expenses in 2023, but not in 2024 and 2025, because it's public contract regulation.</p>
FRA	<p>Following discussions this morning, here is how we do for cost-sharing for international surveys in North Sea. I guess this procedure could be applicable to cost-sharing for SecWeb similarly.</p> <p>For the context, Ireland and The Netherlands conduct the blue whiting survey on behalf of different member states (~8 countries). The remaining countries contribute to the financing of the costs supported respectively by Marine Institute (Ireland) and Wageningen Institute (NLD). To do so, an agreement is signed annually between all MS involved, fixing a % of contribution by MS and thus the estimated cost for the following year by country.</p> <p>For France, we also set up in place a complementary bilateral agreement btw our Ministry and each institute, which sets up the yearly price for each and allows us to register the upcoming cost. Each year, after the campaign, the institutes send us a report and an invoice, and we pay according on this basis.</p> <p>I guess the same process could be done by a voluntary institute/administration</p> <p>we agree on cost-sharing through a RCG recommendation and specifications for the secretariat</p> <p>an institute/an administration from a voluntary country go through a procurement contract procedure, following specifications given by SecWeb and agreed</p> <p>a formal agreement is set bilaterally btw each country and the administration/institute</p> <p>the secretariat is followed by the administration or the institute, which at the end of each year provide each country with an invoice</p> <p>Hope this can help, please fill free to share if needed,</p> <p>I had contact with our financial services, and given the amount requested (8k€ to 12k€) for France, we can set a contract directly with the selected service that will ensure the secretariat, without going through 3 offers. A contract from 1st January 2023 seems feasible. but will need to be signed by mid-december.</p>
HRV	
ITA	
CYP	

WP3 – Ensuring future operation and funding

LVA	
LTU	<p>I would like to suggest another way of managing the activity of Secretariat.</p> <p>Maybe it is possible to organize the Secretariat activity by the base of multi-lateral agreement with Member States (like we have multi-lateral agreement between responsible MS for data collection in SPRFMO and CECAF regions) and no requirements for public procurement procedures in that case appear. According to our legislation, the agreement shall be approved by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Competition Council of the Republic of Lithuania and Ministry of Justice.</p> <p>But once it is approved, it is legal for many years and such costs will be eligible all the time until the multilateral agreement will exist.</p>
HUN	
MLT	
NLD	
AUT	<p>According to our understanding of the tables provided, Austria's annual contribution would amount to 470 Euros annually. If this is the correct assumption, we can agree with the proposal.</p> <p>On the practicalities: We would prefer to pay this amount from the technical assistance component of EMFAF, as the procedures are simpler and due to our limited staff resources, we welcome every avoidance of administrative burden.</p>
POL	
PRT	
ROU	
SVN	
SVK	
FIN	
SWE	