

Resource Coordination Tool and Content Administration for Reports and Advice

*Council is invited to **take note** of the further progress of the development of tools for streamlining working procedures*

Update on IT Tools – RCT & CARA

After receiving approval for further funding, new improvements are in progress to both the Resource Coordination Tool (RCT) and Content and Administration of Reports and Advice (CARA). The work on these improvements will continue through the winter and are planned for completion by spring 2016.

Improvements to the RCT include further integration with Microsoft Outlook and SharePoint as well as implementation of ToRs and Resolutions directly in the RCT. The potential to include the Recommendations database is also being explored. Furthermore, personal user profiles will be activated for the RCT, allowing individuals to access and update their personal information in the system (details on contact info, skills/ecoregions/functional groups, as well as commitments/availability for the coming year).

Reports can be generated as per Member Country wishes in dialogue with the Secretariat. An initial example is shown in Annex 2. In the next phase of development greater access to RCT by the ICES community (Delegates and others as appropriate) is being investigated to allow greater automation of the nomination system and to access reports e.g. on current and planned member activities. .

The “Chair-invited” member reports will now be available online as a dynamic link with the most up-to-date information available for Delegates when they need it (<https://admin.ices.dk/viewreports/report/chairinvitedfiltered.aspx>). From 2016 the weekly email notifications will be discontinued.

CARA has been improved with greater search and linking functionalities (now linked to historic table module and catch table module, linking in progress to stock list database for CARA & RCT). Template development is planned for early 2016, after which the templates will be functional for both Science and Advisory groups.

Council Approved Use of Equity: Strategic Investment in the Further Development of the Resource Coordination Tool (RCT), and the Content and Administration of Reports and Advice (CARA)

1 Outline of proposals for which funding from equity was approved in August 2015

In August 2013, Council via electronic decision-making procedure approved the funding from equity for necessary improvements to ease working procedures for the ICES Community and to increase the support and facilitation role of the Secretariat.

The allocated additional financing was given for additional hardware/software, and for an additional 1½ years of human resource needed for implementing the new IT tools and ensuring compatibility with existing processes and hardware/software at ICES.

Significant progress has been made and is evident externally in the ICES Stock Assessment Database, improvements to the online meeting calendar, possibility for the Secretariat to draw reports on resource use per institution/country, and the format of advice. Within the Secretariat the change from Address Manager to the RCT is a major change of interface and provides a much more powerful work planning tool.

This proposal for use of equity is a follow-up to the earlier investment. Additional investment is needed in order to capitalize on and further develop the tools to ensure an effective and efficient organization capable of serving the community in the best way, through:

1. the Content and Administration of Reports and Advice (CARA); and
2. the Resource Coordination Tool.

Support for these investments have been gauged in the Finance Committee, Council Working Group on the ICES Business Model, and the June Bureau meeting, stressing the importance of ensuring a continued development without interruption as well as understanding that this work requires a significant investment of time and cannot be accommodated within the regular work plan.

The total cost of the two proposals amounts to a need for additional resources of 525,000 DKK.

Furthermore, an additional investment in ICES training courses is requested. Over a three year period, 2015–2017, Council is requested to allocate up to a maximum of 300,000 DKK in order to develop the scope and technical infrastructure for ICES training courses.

The requested financing would not affect the agreed Budgets or change national contributions for 2015 and 2016, as the requested

funding is from equity. Altogether, the requested investment from equity is 825,000 DKK.

Below is a further description of the status of RCT and CARA and the needed work to further develop these tools. Also outlined is a description of the needed activities for the further development of the ICES training programme.

2 Functionalities of the Resource Coordination Tool (RCT)

The 2014 Council meeting commended progress on the development of the RCT and supported further development and implementation. Likewise, positive feedback on the RCT was received following presentation at the EFARO General Assembly in June 2015, where wishes for further development of the RCT were expressed.

As outlined at the 2013 Council meeting, the Resource Coordination Tool (RCT) is to serve as an information base for the planning and prioritization of overall human resources used to implement the ICES work plan. This will ease the planning and budgeting work for institutes, help experts get a better overview of their commitments, and also provide ICES (and other advisory bodies including STECF and others outside of the EU) with a better overview of the entire work processes.

While originally set up to match available scientific expert resources to the proposed work plan of the advisory process, the RCT has been expanded to also include the science process. As agreed, the next step should include the use of the RCT as a component of a larger ICES work plan tool, covering both advice and science, to deal with the process planning and deliverables.

2.1 Status by the closure of the first phase of the RCT and further needed developments

After a “soft” start in Q1 2015, the RCT is now live and being used for ICES work, primarily in the Secretariat. At the moment the RCT consists of two system frameworks: the CRM (customer relationship manager) and SharePoint.

2.1.1 CRM

All information from the former “Address Manager” database has now been transferred to the RCT’s CRM (customer relationship management) system. This means that the CRM has become the exclusive database for recording key information on ICES stakeholders and activities.

Reporting on activities by institution/country is available from 2015, and can be accessed by the Secretariat. In the next phase development will include externally accessible reports.

2.1.2 SharePoint

In this more public part of the RCT system, one can find calendar overviews of ICES activities. On the ICES website a more comprehensive meeting calendar is now available, displaying key information such as:

- Group chair,
- Assisting ICES professionals,
- Location,
- Link to group webpage, etc.,
- Meetings being held by correspondence,
- Meetings with dates still to be confirmed, and
- Advice release dates.

It is also through the SharePoint that institute directors and resource managers are able to add skills to experts in the database. So far 2550 skills have been added to a total of 246 experts. While this is good news, far more skill updates are needed in order to fully utilize the RCT in work planning.

2.1.3 Future Developments

The next phase of RCT development aims at making the system more convenient for users. The focus will be on further integration of the tool with other components and making the system accessible to external users. Proposed developments are as follows:

1. Fully base the RCT system on SharePoint (current running system) in order to keep data in one place,
2. ToRs implementation within RCT,
3. Resolution implementation within RCT,
4. Integration with Microsoft Outlook (Calendar/Contact Lists), and
5. RCT integration with SharePoint user profiles (personal pages), easing the update of expert skills.

2.1.4 Draft Work Timeline

Implementation of all above mentioned developments is scheduled to be completed by the end of Q1 2016.

Timing	Task Description
Sept-Dec 2015	Recommendation database implementation within RCT
Sept-Dec 2015	ToRs and Resolutions Implementation within RCT
Sept-Dec 2015	RCT integration with SharePoint user profiles (allowing users to update & maintain their own profiles).

Dec-Mar 2015	Full implementation of new developments
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2.1.5 Resources and Budget

To complete the next steps with RCT, one technical resource from the IT department will be required to work at 50 percent capacity for a period of approximately 7 months. Another technical resources from the IT department will be required to work at 35 percent capacity for a period of approximately 7 months. In addition, half of an administrative resource will be required throughout development for communications, testing, and teaching assistance.

Dependent upon the desired specifications of the developments, external specialist consulting may be required for timely implementation. For completion of RCT-related tasks, approximately 100,000 DKK worth of consultancy work is budgeted.

3 Functionalities and status of Content and Administration of Reports and Advice (CARA)

CARA is a tool to streamline report and advice production by linking data and analysis to reports and text, by hardwiring guidance to experts and advice drafters into their working tools, and to make reports and advice products easily available in many formats and for further analysis. In the initial phase, CARA has mostly focussed on the advisory process. Awaiting the work within ACOM to make the advice format better fit for purpose in relation to simplification and ecoregion implementation, the work has focussed on the development of the Stock Assessment Database component as part of the wider CARA.

Thus, in 2014–2015 the stock assessment database and graphs have been expanded, dealing with 70+ data poor stocks. Table generation and utilization of the data in EG reports and advice is now available. The stocks database has been developed to incorporate data as required for all parts of standard fisheries advice both regarding stocks which are analytically assessed and stocks with less data available.

3.1 Next steps and deliverables for CARA

Next steps would include testing and development of an enhanced system. The aim is to provide users in ICES Expert Working Groups and Advice drafting groups the added benefits of dynamic data linkage, an integrated advice template reflecting the new format of advice, data integrity and reusability, and enabling cross-linkage between science and advice groups.

In order to fully incorporate products from the Science programme to the CARA system, further work will be necessary to define precise

requirement specifications. These specifications will be defined in close cooperation between the IT and Science departments.

Additional developments would include the further expansion of the stock assessment database and interfaces.

3.1.1 Draft Work Timeline

Completion and testing of prototype and interfaces scheduled to be finish by the end Q2 2016.

Timing	Task Description
Sept-Dec 2015	Develop prototype.
Sept-Dec 2015	Define requirement specifications in cooperation with the Science department
Sept-Dec 2015	Incorporate “finalized” Advice & Science template(s) and underlying logic into prototype and link to other systems / modules (Stock Database, Historic tables, etc.).
Jan-Jun 2016	Test prototype within Secretariat, incorporating "dummy" ADGs and evaluation of system with Advice for potential launch in Feb 2016

3.1.2 Resources and Budget

To complete the next steps with CARA, one technical resource from the IT department will be required to work at 35 percent capacity for a period of approximately 10 months. In addition, half of an administrative resource will be required for communications, testing, and teaching assistance.

Experience has shown that dependent upon the desired specifications of the developments, external specialist consulting may be required for extended customisation and to achieve the tight timeline of timely implementation. For completion of RCT-related tasks, approximately 75,000 DKK worth of consultancy work is budgeted.

3.1.3 Overall resource and budget for RCT and CARA

In order to accomplish the described tasks, additional resources are need in the amount of 350,000 DKK to cover in-house salary costs and 175,000 DKK for external specialist consulting.

Annex 2

Below a screenshot of a report made called “Member Activity for Current year”. Showing how many days have been committed by each country. Many kinds of reports could be made based on Member Country needs. Feedback and further discussion with the Secretariat is welcomed.

Country	Institute / Department	Member	Process	Activity	Start Date	End Date	No. Of Days
Total Number of days = 8	Department of Natural & Applied Sciences	Martha Uumati		WGFAST	2015/05/29	2015/05/29	1
						Total	1
	Department of Oceanography and Climate	Vidar Lien	NA	WGIBAR	2015/06/01	2015/06/05	5
						Total	5
	Environmental Sciences Management Section	Catherine Coon	N/A	WKICA	2015/05/28	2015/05/29	2
						Total	2
Argentina Total Number of days = 16	Centro Nacional Patagonic	Virginia Roland	- N/A	WGRMES	2015/03/12	2015/03/14	3
						Total	3
	Instituto Nacional de Investigacion y Desarrollo Pesquero	Anibal Aubone	NA	WGFTFB	2015/05/04	2015/05/08	5
		Julio Garcia	NA	WGFTFB	2015/05/04	2015/05/08	5
						Total	10
	Servicio de Hidrografia Naval	Ariel Troisi		DIG	2015/05/18	2015/05/20	3
Australia Total Number of days = 90						Total	3
	Australian Antarctic Division	Martin Cox	NA	WGTC	2015/05/29	2015/05/30	2
		Martin Cox		WGFAST	2015/05/29	2015/05/29	1
						Total	3
	Center for Marine Science & Technology	Sven Gastauer		WGFAST	2015/05/29	2015/05/29	1
		Sven Gastauer	NA	WGTC	2015/05/29	2015/05/30	2
						Total	3
	Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources	David Ramm		WGFAST	2015/05/29	2015/05/29	1
						Total	1
	CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research	Alan Williams		WGFAST	2015/05/29	2015/05/29	1
		Beth Fulton	NA	WGIPeM	2015/03/16	2015/03/20	5
		Beth Fulton	NA	WGIMM	2015/05/11	2015/05/12	2
		Cathy Dichmont	NA	WGIMM	2015/05/11	2015/05/12	2
		Gordon Keith		WGFAST	2015/05/29	2015/05/29	1
		John Volkman	- N/A	WGMS	2015/03/02	2015/03/06	5
		Nick Mortimer		WGFAST	2015/05/29	2015/05/29	1