

Protocol on the development of advice and circulation of papers by the NWWRAC

The North Western Waters RAC Secretariat was requested to set-out rules and procedures for developing advice and circulating papers. Considering that NWWRAC opinions may be drafted as result of either (a) An internal NWWRAC initiative or (b) A direct request for Advice from the Commission, the internal sequence of procedures may therefore vary in accordance with the type of advice being formulated. Please refer to the diagrams provided which outline the agreed procedure in all cases.

The following general procedures are suggested for ratification at the next General Assembly meeting of the NWWRAC.

Opinion Papers of the NWWRAC

1. Draft Opinion papers may be drawn up by the NWWRAC Secretariat or by a rapporteur appointed directly by the NWWRAC Chairman. The Secretariat shall circulate members, informing them of the nature and background of the initiative (eg.. NWWRAC's own initiative or response to a request of the EU Commission, etc.), and indicate the required response time.
2. Draft NWWRAC opinion papers shall be clearly marked '**DRAFT NWWRAC PAPER**'; and shall contain the following text in the footer of the document '**This document does not represent the official opinion of the NWWRAC and should not be quoted as such**'. As stipulated in the *Press Protocol* of the NWWRAC, any such NWWRAC drafts should not be circulated to the media.
3. Draft opinion papers will be circulated amongst the members and the observers to the NWWRAC for comment.
4. Members will be allowed a minimum of two weeks to comment on the final draft opinion.
5. Comments will then be incorporated into the draft text and the final draft version will be sent to the Executive Committee for endorsement.

Submissions/Papers from Members

6. *Format of Items Submitted.* All Submissions should be made in electronic written format in one of the NWWRAC working languages (EN/FR/ES). Documents translated into any of the other working languages would also be most appreciated.
7. *Length of Items Submitted.* Submissions should be as succinct as possible and written in simple forms of expression. Unnecessary idioms and colloquialisms should be avoided as much as possible. Submissions should not normally exceed 1,000 words.
8. *Procedure of Submission.*(Please refer to diagrams provided). Submissions to the NWWRAC must be made **via the relevant Working Group or Focus Group meetings**. Items submitted for consideration should be forwarded to the Secretariat a **minimum of 3 weeks prior to the working group meeting**, to enable the timely translation and circulation of the item prior to the meeting itself.
9. To respect the original text/format of the submission, the Secretariat shall circulate the item to NWWRAC members in PDF format.

10. Submissions made to the NWWRAC should be accompanied by clear instructions on how the author would like the submission to be handled by the NWWRAC. Ideally, the submission would be in the form of a proposal, clearly outlining how the author would like the Working Group to proceed.

11. *Translation of Submissions.* The NWWRAC Secretariat shall ensure the timely translation and distribution of submissions, which, in any case, will be made available and distributed in all NWWRAC working languages (EN, FR, ES) **at least one week** prior to the meeting in which they are to be reviewed. Considering the limited translation budget available, the Secretariat shall liaise closely with the Meeting Chairperson to agree which papers are most appropriate for translation at that meeting. When circulating documents, the Secretariat shall indicate in which NWWRAC working language (EN/FR/ES) the document originated.

For details of agreed procedure/ deadlines in the circulation of documents prior to meetings, please see document entitled *Code of Conduct for NWWRAC Meetings*