



## **Guidelines on the functioning of the Focus Groups**

**18 June 2019**

Article 30 in the **MAC Statutes** states that the Executive Committee may establish Working Groups (WGs) and Focus Groups (FGs).

Furthermore, point 17 of the **Rules of Procedures** specify that “Working Groups may request the creation of a Focus Group with the aim of preparing a first draft.”

There are **no detailed rules**, neither in the MAC Statutes nor in the Rules of Procedure, specifying the functioning of FGs. However, by common practice, these are meant to **prepare - at a more technical level - input** for the Working Group on specific questions or issues.

A FG should **not be a strategic or decision-making group**. The output of a FG should not necessarily be a draft advice, it can be a simple document with ideas, scenarios or options, following in depth discussions and brainstorming sessions and input by, where possible, scientists and other experts. The relevant WG will decide, following thorough discussion, on the final draft to be presented, discussed and eventually approved by the Executive Committee.

**Terms of reference** and clear **scope / mandate** of FGs, with description of tasks and objectives and a timeline, must be clearly determined by the relevant WG or, where appropriate, by the Executive Committee. If members of a FG feel that its scope is not sufficiently clear, the case would need to be brought back to WG or at Executive Committee level for clarification and / or further discussion and decision.

The members of a FG would ideally participate on the basis of knowledge of the issue to be discussed. Although we would look for a **fair representation** of the different stakeholders in the MAC, a FG may **not always** reflect the exact composition of the Executive Committee.

The ideal number of participants should be **between 5 and 10 persons**, with possibility to accept additional participants, without this leading to hampering the discussion / process or to lengthening the timeline of delivering the draft advice.

In the end what matters is the **quality** and the **timeliness** of the advice the MAC can produce. Structures and rules are needed to organise our work, **flexibility, trust** and **willingness to cooperate** are needed to progress our work.