



MEETING OF THE ADVISORY GROUP ON DATA COMMUNICATION, AGDC

6 April 2006 – NEAFC HQ London

DRAFT REPORT

1. Opening

The Chairman, Mr Gylfi Geirsson (Iceland), called the third meeting of the Group to order welcoming everybody. All Contracting Parties were present. He noted that Regional Fisheries Bodies have been invited through the Regional Secretariats network and that there were regrets from NAFO, ICCAT and CCAMLR.

2. Appointment of the rapporteur

The Secretariat was appointed rapporteur.

3. Discussion and adoption of the agenda

The Chairman went through the agenda and listed some additional items under any other business (SEAFO, Information on IUU vessel on the website, discussion of annexes and messages related to port state control, look-up and down-load possibilities related to Annex 2 and notification of cargo vessels).

He asked if there were further proposals for amendments to the agenda. The Norwegian representative wanted to discuss the new error codes and the possibilities of limiting the number of return messages. She supported discussion of the Annex II messages. The EU representative would like a repetition of the Secretariat's presentation of the amendments to the website given yesterday to PECCOE. He wanted to follow up on the advice given to NAFO on shrimps in 3L and also to find ways to fine tune the work of the Group, especially when answering requests for advice. He informed that Guido Lemoine from JRC was present and would participate in the discussion of technical questions. The agenda was adopted as amended.

4. Management of the North Atlantic Format (NAF) within NEAFC

- Art. 11 Pilot Project

The Chairman invited the Secretariat to inform on developments in the database with respect to the pilot project. The Secretariat responded that the database has been adapted to meet the requirements and noted that it would be interesting if parties other than Iceland took part in the project. The message “prepare for inspection” only works for vessels notified to the project.

The Icelandic representative informed that at a recent course for inspectors there had been some confusion about how to use the free text field.

5. Management of the North Atlantic Format (NAF) as a standard

- NAFO – management of the NAF site

The Secretariat informed that they had had discussions with NAFO. NEAFC felt it was easier if only one organisation was responsible for the NAF website, but NAFO has made some helpful suggestions, which could be taken on. With respect to what is on the website, NEAFC feels that features which are specific to each RFMO are in the public domain on the respective RFMO websites and need not be on the NAF website.

- FAO/CWP

The Secretariat informed that they had been instructed to join CWP¹ and at present did not have any data input to that Group, other than progress reports on developments in VMS data and new sources of data on fisheries from, for example, electronic logbooks.

- SEAFO

The Secretariat reported on cooperation with SEAFO in setting up an initial VMS system for that organisation. NEAFC provides technical assistance and, on a provisional basis, will host data in the NEAFC database, probably for a period of one to three years.

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked about security when SEAFO was allowed access to the database. The Secretariat informed that nothing would happen until strict confidentiality rules had been established and SEAFO would not have any access to NEAFC data. The Chairman thought this was an important point raised by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and he felt that Attachment V should be used here. He thought cooperation important and a way to ensure compatibility and possibilities of exchanging data.

The EU representative asked if this was a temporary solution and this was confirmed by the Secretariat. The Norwegian representative thought this a positive development and asked what software would be made available by NEAFC. The Secretariat responded that SEAFO will have to set up their own computers to meet their needs and access will be kept completely separate. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) supported the Chairman and proposed that Attachment V should be reviewed to ensure security rules are quite clear and make what the Secretariat could or could not do transparent. The EU representative asked whether NEAFC will

¹ Coordinating Working Party on Fisheries Statistics of FAO

receive messages directly from vessels in the SEAFO area. The Secretariat responded that the information will be forwarded via FMCs and monitored by Contracting Parties.

The Chairman invited JRC to share their wide technical experience with applications that may be available to SEAFO. The representative of JRC responded that there were a variety of solutions and he was willing to liaise with SEAFO. He asked if there was anybody volunteering to look at Attachment V as suggested by Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland). Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that it is perhaps not necessary to revise Attachment V. He wanted to identify rules that would allow the Secretariat to provide services to other RFMOs. The Secretariat agreed and thought that a general review of Attachment V would be helpful. The Norwegian representative supported this and would also like to look into what could go on the website and where. What level of security is needed for each sort of information? Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) suggested that permission to ICES and others to ask for data from the database should also be part of this review. The Chairman suggested that this should be linked to the work of the PECCOE drafting group.

Actions Arising

A general review of Attachment V and rules for accessing data will be undertaken linked to the work of the PECCOE drafting group.

6. Relationship with other RFMOs and FAO

There was nothing to add to what was said under agenda item 5, second bullet point.

7. Any other business

The Secretariat made a presentation of the new design of the NEAFC website. There was more space for information. A new application is the tracking of active inspectors' presence. The EU representative welcomed the improvements and would be in contact with the Secretariat to make good use of them. The Norwegian representative also welcomed the development. She asked if statisticians in Norway could liaise with the Secretariat with respect to inputting REP and JUR data on the website. The Secretariat answered that it would input January and February data and would then contact people in national administrations to volunteer to make comments on its usefulness. Iceland volunteered to participate. The Secretariat once again noted that statistics do not necessarily have to be included in the Scheme.

Actions Arising

The Secretariat will input January and February data and would then contact people in national administrations to volunteer to make comments on its usefulness. Norway and Iceland volunteered to participate.

- **Data transmission protocols – status of migration to HTTPS**

The Secretariat reported on recent developments. Nineteen FMCs are connected to the database. Seven use HTTPS; EU –Denmark, the Russian Federation, EU -Germany, EU - Lithuania, Denmark-Faroe Islands, Denmark-Greenland. EU -Spain and EU - Portugal are about to migrate. Tests have been going on with the EU-Commission, but HTTPS is still not in operation. The development is a huge improvement over X.25 and makes it cheaper to run the database. EU -Estonia is also in the process of migrating, but had been slowed down by the change of provider.

The Norwegian representative informed that Norway had not changed anything vis-à-vis NEAFC, but had HTTPS connections with other parties. They had experienced problems sending messages to Iceland. Capacity seemed to be very limited. Trackwell had informed that this was because the NEAFC specifications required confirmation of each message. She asked the Secretariat whether its GET POST requests HTTPS solution uses the GET or the POST method. In the specifications written by Trackwell (27/01/05) and distributed by the NEAFC Secretariat to the Contracting Parties both these methods are listed as possible for sending messages.

The Secretariat responded that they relied on Trackwell's IT expertise. They had experienced glitches with Greenland. JRC said that that the client decides on the use of GET or POST for use with HTTPS. However, it should be borne in mind that the GET method has limitations – it is limited to a certain maximum message size (typically 1024 bytes), so it would probably not be the NEAFC system that set the limits. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked if messages were pooled from several vessels. The Norwegian representative noted this had always been the case. This is a probable reason why the GET request limit size is exceeded. It was suggested that this should be discussed with Trackwell.

The Chairman was aware of these problems. He would support any moves towards making the database more efficient and smooth running. The Secretariat could contact Trackwell and he would appreciate help from JRC. The EU representative accepted that HTTPS was on its way in and X.25 definitely on its way out, but this was not a simple move. The EU plans to have a meeting on the phasing out of X.25 within the EU and would like to call in external experts with experience. FMCs have also to be able to talk to FMCs outside the EU. A formal invitation to experts in AGDC would be issued in due course to bring in the experience of other Parties. The security certificates seemed to be a major stumbling block. He hoped it would be possible to have written contributions in advance of the meeting and this could lead to a general guide for changes from X.25 to HTTPS.

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) agreed it was a challenge to set the system up, especially certificates. There had to be experts at both ends. For Greenland communication with NAFO had been difficult, but with Russia there had been no problems. The NEAFC Secretariat is at present the certification authority. The Secretariat observed that the service provider assists in all migrations and this generally only takes five work hours for the provider. Migration seems to run more and more smoothly.

Actions Arising

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- **Information on IUU vessels' up-to-date status on inspector's website**

In discussions in PECCOE the possibility of linking directly to the database to allow the automatic updating of information on IUU vessels had been raised. The Secretariat reported that they had suggested a solution allowing access to up to date information, based on information received, by clicking on the IMO number of IUU vessels. EU-Sweden stressed that access to the whole history of the vessel was important for legal proceedings. The Chairman agreed. The Secretariat noted that this meant information going back to the year 2000.

Actions Arising

The Secretariat will develop a solution allowing access to up to date information and case stories of IUU vessels, based on information received, by clicking on the IMO number of IUU vessels.

- **New messages/messages related to port state inspection**

The Chairman reported that this had been discussed on a preliminary basis in PECCOE. It would not be possible to address this problem until the PECCOE drafting group had finalised its work, but the AGDC should be aware of the fact that the Group would be asked to find solutions. The Norwegian representative found it important to devise reporting systems and formats and this would be an opportunity to look at efficient solutions. The Chairman pointed out that requests for advice could arise as early as June. It was agreed that this could be discussed electronically as the Group had done last year and the Chairman urged Parties to participate.

Actions Arising

Advice on messages related to port state inspection may be required as soon as June 2006. This could be discussed electronically within the Group.

- **Annex II - Inspector's site look-up and download**

The Icelandic representative had submitted a discussion paper that listed some suggestions. He noted that the inspector's site had been particularly useful for air inspection platforms. EU -Denmark found the facility very useful and supported ideas in the Icelandic paper. He would also like a facility that would make it possible to reuse information that goes into the database for reporting. There was a need to search not only on a specific vessel, but on categories of vessels. The Secretariat asked if it would be helpful to have reports according to Annex 11a and 12 on the site. He invited those inspectors not familiar with the site to contact the Secretariat.

The Chairman noted that inspectors had made the comment that it would be useful to have information on when a vessel was last inspected in the single vessel window. He supported the proposal to make it possible to scroll lists of vessels. JRC suggested a small liaison group between the Secretariat and inspectors. The Chairman supported this idea. EU-Denmark did not think it was expensive to make these applications

available on the website, so funding should not be a concern. The Chairman accepted this. Changing the VMS system was expensive, but not the website.

The point was made that a policy for access to the database was needed, but that should be developed by PECCOE; AGDC solved technical problems. Responding to EU –Sweden, the Secretariat stated that the present security system was set up for a trial period. After that period a more sophisticated system could be put in place, particularly controlling what could be input into the system. The Norwegian representative thought that both security and efficiency had to be considered. We should use new developments as an opportunity to review the whole matter. The Chairman suggested that this should be dealt with in the discussion of Attachment V. It was noted that it was not possible at the moment to track who actually accesses the inspector's website.

Actions Arising

The Secretariat will take note of the comments made above and seek to include them in the inspector's website.
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- **Notification of cargo vessels**

This was discussed briefly in October 2005 in Copenhagen. The Chairman invited the Secretariat to comment on how it might be possible to notify a cargo vessel where numbering is different from fishing vessels and causes an error. The Secretariat drew attention to Attachment IVb, which allows the system to allocate a specific code for cargo vessels. However, the element (TP) for this code in the NOT report is optional. One way would be to make the type of vessel (TP) in these cases mandatory as suggested by the Norwegian representative. This could be limited to situations where the type of vessel is FO or MO, then the external number will be optional. This solution would not demand any revision of the Scheme, simply minor changes to the system at the Secretariat. The EU representative suggested that a solution would be to use the IMO number in the mandatory XR data element in the NOT report. This could be done without any technical changes. The Chairman asked if anybody would volunteer to scrutinise these two proposals until June so as to report to the drafting group if any change in the Scheme was needed.

Actions Arising

Volunteers are sought to scrutinise the proposals made above before the 16 June 2006. The scrutiny should be made available to the PECCOE drafting group
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- **Implementation of last amendments to error codes**

The Chairman invited the Norwegian representative to comment on this problem. The Norwegian representative was not quite sure if there had been any actual problems with the reports sent from Norway to NEAFC that should have resulted from the new error codes, but in March she had received error 102 and thought it was an old error code. The Secretariat would check if everything was in place with the new error codes. The Norwegian representative suggested that the Secretariat informed Contracting Parties when changes took place. She asked if the optional element in return messages had been introduced. The Secretariat would check. The Chairman asked if this required changes at FMC level and if they will get errors if they have not

changed their systems. The Secretariat was not informed when FMCs update the system. Most FMCs do not use the return messages, but five or six regularly review it.

Actions Arising

The Secretariat will check the status of the introduction of the new error codes and report to the October 2006 meeting.

- **Return on Position messages only when not acknowledged**

The Chairman felt that it was possible to skip return messages with respect to position. It is not possible generally to correct positions that have been received. The Norwegian representative agreed that these return messages did overload the system with unnecessary information. Other return messages were important. Russia noted that they made use of all return messages and wanted to keep return messages for positions. The Norwegian representative noted that the return messages for acknowledged positions were not included in bilateral agreements and would support the same arrangement in NEAFC.

- **NAFO/3L shrimps**

The Group has responded to this request from the EU after electronic communication. The Chairman invited the representative of the EU to report on the item.

The EU representative thanked the Chairman and the Group for having responded speedily to this request. It showed that the Group was able to respond without meeting. He asked EU -Estonia to present the problem outstanding. EU -Estonia also thanked the group. The problem related to the prawn pilot project and the daily catch reports. There are some additional mandatory elements which caused problems. The Chairman informed that in his response he had proposed a template for a catch report as used by NEAFC, CAT, and that should avoid this problem. This should not be confused with the Pilot Project Catch Report "CAX". The Norwegian representative remembered that it had been felt that a report before entering a new division would solve the problem, but not much detail had been discussed. She thought that it should be possible to find a solution, but was not prepared to do so at this meeting. If NAFO made the pilot project permanent it would be covered by NAFO's general system.

The Chairman noted that there are at present no catch reports in NAFO, but NEAFC Contracting Parties would be familiar with the NEAFC system. The Secretariat could assist NAFO to change their system. The Chairman would like to examine the details before giving a final answer. He would be pleased to do that and in a few days send an e-mail to the group clarifying the response given earlier and whether there was any need for modification. He would like other parties to comment when he had done so. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) pointed out that it had been decided to introduce a weekly catch report, but there was no catch report format available in NAFO. Things may change at the NAFO Annual Meeting in September. This was accepted and the earlier advice of the EU was circulated.

- **Technical questions from the last meeting**

JRC asked about the status of technical questions from the last meeting. He noted that e-mail boxes had been introduced. The Secretariat had been asked to provide excel sheets with error statistics and a note on website access statistics.

The Secretariat proposed to link the e-mail boxes with the inspector's website. Information on error codes will be presented at the October meeting of the AGDC. Data on the tracking of access to the statistics and inspection sites will also be reported then.

- **Working methods of AGDC**

The Chairman invited the EU representative to comment. He questioned whether it is necessary for the Group to meet after every PECCOE meeting as it is possible to work by correspondence. The agenda sent out had been very thin. The Chairman agreed that it would be preferable to have only one meeting a year, but the Commission had decided otherwise. He accepted that it would not always be necessary to meet back-to-back with PECCOE and had noted with satisfaction that the Group had been able to work by correspondence. He asked for comments. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) found it productive to work on the internet, but face to face meetings are also useful. He noted that the Chairman had perhaps had problems getting reactions from members. The number of meetings should depend on the issues at hand. The Norwegian representative admitted that the meeting could be better prepared, for example by submitting papers and comments well in advance. Working on the internet did not exclude meetings.

The Chairman suggested introducing the same rule as in PECCOE where submissions should be circulated one month before a meeting. He found it difficult to say in advance when physical meetings were needed, but these should certainly not be more than necessary. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) suggested a user group for frequent exchange of views and a space for airing problems. It was suggested that space could be made available on the NAF website.

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) asked if the request from the Deep-sea Group had been acted on. This was confirmed.

8. Date and place of the next meeting

5 October has been scheduled. If the meeting is not necessary it can be cancelled. The merging of the Schemes may lead to requests to the Group, but it remained to be seen how things developed.

9. Closure of the meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting and thanked participants for a fruitful meeting and good discussions and wished them a safe journey home.



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ADVISORY GROUP FOR DATA COMMUNICATION
6 April 2006 – London

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9. Date and place of the next meeting
10. Closure of the meeting



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chair – Geirsson, Gylfi

Secretariat

Hoydal, Kjartan

Neves, João

Partridge, Kate

Lewsley, Rachel

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)

Kruse, Martin - Faroe Islands

Lund, Mads – Greenland

Nedergaard, Mads - Greenland

Estonia

Martin, Kaire

Ulla, Indrek

European Union

Nolan, Fergal – EC

Quillinan, Mike – EC

Thomson, Andrew – EC

Avedillo, Buenaventura – Spain

Bogelius, Anders - Sweden

Del Hierro, Javier, Spain

Dybiec, Leszek - Poland

Eliassen, Jorgen – Denmark

Lopes, Luis Miguel - Portugal

McLeod, Michael - UK

Vonk, Harry - Netherlands

Timon, Eric – Ireland

Smyth, Eoin - Ireland

Lemoine, Guido - JRC

Iceland

Ágústsson, Auðunn

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