

FAO COORDINATING WORKING PARTY ON FISHERY STATISTICS, CWP Twenty-second Session and FIRMS¹ Steering Committee Meeting Fourth Session

FAO HQ 26 February – 2 March 2007
Note by the NEAFC Secretariat

1. Introduction

The Secretariat participated in meetings of CWP and FIRMS at FAO Headquarters in Rome from 26 February to 13 March.

The draft reports from the two meeting meetings have been released and can be found at the following links.

ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/FIGIS_FIRMS/2007/report.pdf

ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/cwp/cwp_22/default.htm

2. CWP

The following RFBs and RFMOs² are members of CWP:

- Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)
- Commission for the Conservation Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)
- Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)
- International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT)
- International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)
- Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO)
- North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)
- Permanent Commission of the South Pacific (CPPS)
- Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)
- South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO)
- Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat)
- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

Traditionally CWP has focussed on official landings data reported by national statistical offices over the STATLANT system. These data are reported to FAO worldwide and regional agencies - in the North-East Atlantic to ICES.

Following a recommendation by an FAO Expert Consultation in 2004³ the inter-sessional meeting of CWP in 2006 agreed to follow the development of NAF closely, in particular with regard to its usefulness for assessment and scientific purposes in

¹ Fisheries Resources Monitoring System

² Regional Fisheries Bodies and Regional Management Organisations

³ FAO Fisheries Report No. 761 FIPD/R761 (En) ISSN 0429-9337

Report of the EXPERT CONSULTATION ON DATA FORMATS AND PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING, CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE

Bergen, Norway, 25–27 October 2004

PECCOE 2007-01-08 and AGDC 2007-01-03

addition to the MCS function. It appeared that VMS generated data are of great interest to many scientists and several members reported on requests for VMS data from their scientists.

NEAFC and NAFO are the custodians of the *NAF format for VMS positioning*. In addition to NEAFC and NAFO, it is currently being used by SEAFO and CCAMLR uses a very similar system. The format is being used dynamically by RFMOs and states. This is discussed in the NEAFC Advisory Group on Data Communication, AGDC. This Group is open to all users of the NAF format and invitations are sent out to all parties through the Regional Fishery Bodies Secretariats Network.

At the last meeting of the AGDC it was concluded that the NAF format with proposed extensions may suffice for the information in electronic logbooks. If all scientific information is to be included, it will not.

NEAFC reported in detail on NEAFC data. The report is attached to this note.

3. FIRMS

Three new partners signed the Partnership Agreements in Rome including NEAFC.

The list of partners is now:

	<i>Institutional Partner</i>	<i>Date of Signature</i>
1	Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)	2 December 2003
2	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)	19 December 2003
3	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)	30 January 2004
4	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) – Fisheries Department	2 February 2004
5	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)	2 February 2004
6	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)	2 February 2004
7	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO)	22 October 2004
8	Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)	14 December 2004
9	Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT)	31 May 2005
10	Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)	6 February 2006
11	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)	2 March 2007

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12	South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO)	2 March 2007
13	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)	2 March 2007

The FIRMS database was launched in April 2006. In the first phase it has concentrated on documenting stock assessments in the North East Atlantic provided by ICES.

In a second phase in the not too distant future the database will be supplemented with a description of fisheries. NEAFC has provided an example of this with FIRMS; however, this is still not in the public domain. Cooperation will be continued and in essence involves supplying the management decisions based on stock assessments and scientific advice.

NEAFC Progress Report - CWP 22, Rome February 2007

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1. Introduction

This report is an update of the information submitted to the Intersessional Meeting of CWP Agencies in Madrid, Spain, 14-15 February 2006

2. Compilation of Catch and Landings Statistics in NEAFC

According to Article 9 of the Convention

1)The Commission may - by a qualified majority - make recommendations providing for the collection of statistical information relating to fisheries conducted beyond areas under the fisheries jurisdiction of Contracting Parties.

2)The Commission may also make recommendations providing for the collection of statistical information relating to fisheries conducted within an area under the fisheries jurisdiction of a Contracting Party, provided that the recommendation receives the affirmative vote of that Contracting Party.

This means that the Commission can make recommendations on how fisheries statistics are compiled. This possibility has not been used recently. When rules for compilation of catch statistics were introduced there seems to have been a wish to obtain rather more detailed data than compiled under earlier NEAFC recommendations.

Up to 1 July 1999 weekly catch statistics of redfish and mackerel were gathered by the Secretariat. With the coming into force of the Scheme of Control and Enforcement two new ways of reporting catches were introduced under Articles 8 and 10 of the Scheme.

A specific problem for NEAFC has been that, in order to follow the uptake of NEAFC quotas, catches of regulated stocks have to be broken down into both areas beyond and within the fisheries jurisdiction of Contracting Parties. Official catch figures reported under the STATLANT system to ICES and FAO did not offer this breakdown until quite recently.

2.1 The two level system of compilation of catch data in the NE Atlantic

Catches are reported to NEAFC at two levels: Weekly catches directly from the vessels (Article 10 of the Scheme) and provisional aggregate monthly landings submitted by the statistical offices of the Contracting Parties (Article 8 of the Scheme).

2.2 Communications of weekly catches from vessels - Article 10 and Annex VII

The Scheme stipulates that vessels shall report weekly catches and quantities on board upon entry, exit and transshipment. This can be an automated report by VMS or by fax or telex sent to NEAFC via the Contracting Party's FMC.

If these reports were fully implemented, and particularly if messages were automated, this would give NEAFC an almost 'real time' picture of catches, effort and catch positions.

Inspectors seem to use these catch data during boarding when FMCs have the technical capacity to transfer data in real-time to the inspection platforms. There is no feedback on the systematic use of vessels' catch data on sea or port inspections.

2.3 Reporting of catch and fishing effort

NEAFC runs reporting system, which tracks the accumulated catches based on monthly reports of catches beyond or within waters under the jurisdiction of Contracting Parties. The basis is that Contracting Parties report catches for one month and cumulative catches of regulated and non-regulated species one month after the month landing or transshipment took place.

Contracting Parties are required to report the "ICES area where the catch is taken". It has been assumed that this means reporting on ICES Sub-areas and/or Divisions and/or Sub-divisions. In a strict sense, the term "ICES Area" means the whole of the ICES area, similar in size to the whole NEAFC Convention Area. This seems to have led to a situation where it is not possible for Contracting Parties to report in sufficient detail.

Discussions between Heads of Delegations in April 2002 seemed to reflect a consensus on a need for reliable and timely data on quota uptakes in the NEAFC Area. This could be achieved by leaving out reference to ICES Area. A table format suggested by the Secretariat seemed to be an acceptable solution. This format could be introduced by a recommendation under Article 9 of the Convention, but that would mean that Article 8 should be removed from the Scheme.

At its meeting on 28-29 May 2002, PECCOE discussed the consequences of deleting Article 8 of the Scheme. It was agreed that the present system under the Scheme does not work. In the discussion the general feeling was that the situation could be remedied without deleting Article 8. The simplest way would be to remove the reference to ICES Area in Annex V in the data element "relevant area" to ICES Area.

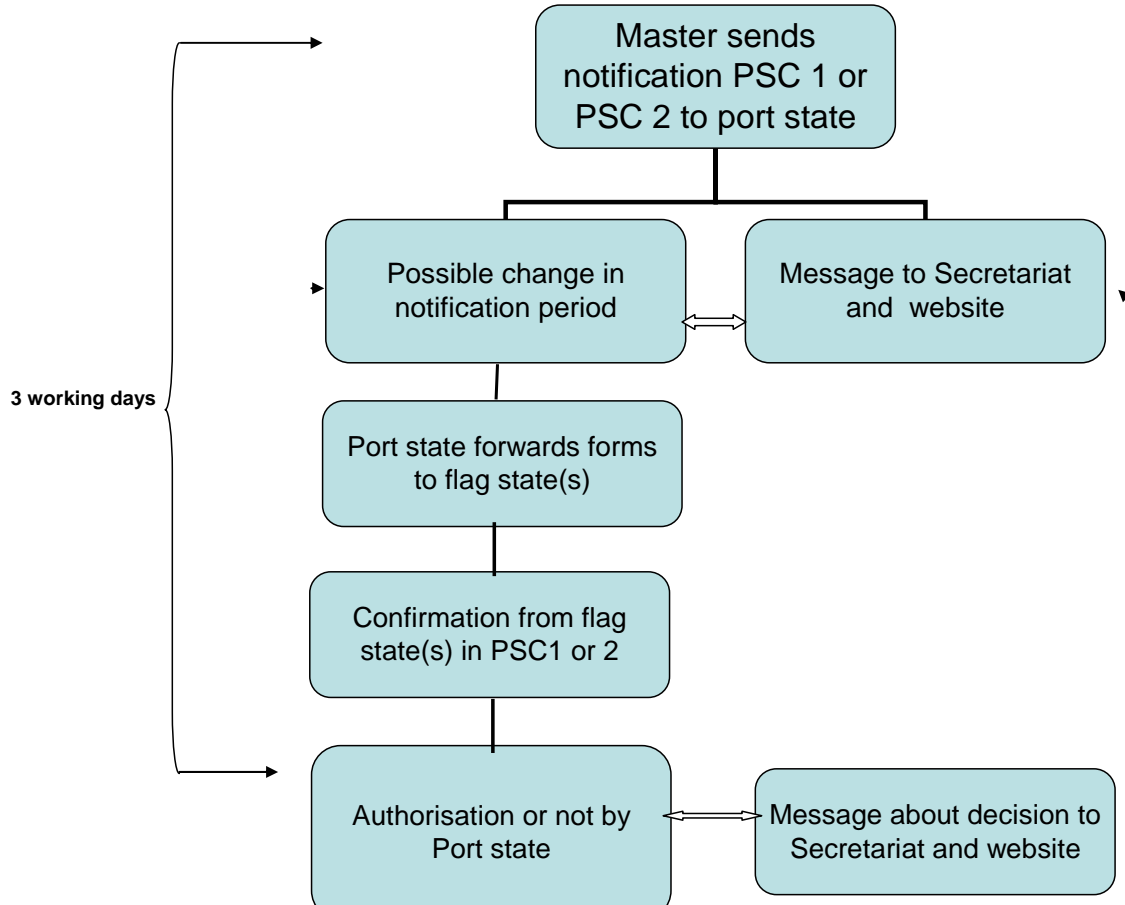
3. Port state control

The NEAFC Commission decided unanimously in November 2006 to adopt stricter port state control measures. The measures, which will come into effect from 1 May 2007, provide for prior notification of landings of frozen fish by foreign fishing vessels that will include a declaration by the master of the vessel of the catch on board. Before the landings can be authorised by the port state, the flag state must exercise its responsibilities by verifying the information provided in the declaration. In particular, the flag state must confirm that the fishing vessel had sufficient quota that the catch had been taken into account for monitoring quota uptake. The flag state must also confirm that the vessel was authorised to fish and the area of catch has been verified by VMS. Without this confirmation, no authorisation can be given by the port state. Without authorisation no landing can occur. The control measures also include new obligations and benchmarks as regards inspections to be carried out by the port state. The port state control measures will provide the means to control landings of illegally caught fish from the NEAFC Convention Area. The adoption of

these measures can be seen as a major breakthrough which establishes concrete, practical arrangements for strengthening control by port states.

Port state control of foreign vessels

Article 22-23 of the consolidated Scheme entering into force 1 May 2007



No automatic capture of the information in the port forms has been planned in the first phase. It has not been decided if NEAFC wants to compile the data in a central database as it is done with other data transmitted from national authorities. This would make it possible to extract consolidated statistics from the notifications.

4. Data on deep sea Fisheries

NEAFC has set up a special system for compiling data on distinct deep-sea fisheries and scientific information on deep-sea fishing.

Contracting Parties shall submit to the NEAFC Secretariat in the first quarter of 2007, at the latest, available information relevant to defining distinct deep-sea fisheries, which contribute to any catch of deep-sea species. Contracting Parties have agreed to provide scientific information concerning deep-sea fishing in accordance with the requirements below:

4.1 Provision of scientific information concerning deep-sea fishing

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Among the general principles of the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement the states party to this agreement undertake to; adopt measures to ensure long-term sustainability of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks and to promote the objective of their optimum utilization; to ensure that such measures are based on the best scientific evidence available and to collect and share, in a timely manner, complete and accurate data concerning fishing activities. The Review Conference on the UN Fish Stocks Agreement held in May 2006 agreed that these general principles should also apply to discrete high seas fish stocks. In the spirit of this agreement the following elements are agreed to augment existing data collecting regimes among the Contracting Parties.

1. Contracting Parties shall communicate to ICES, for each half calendar year, information (listed below) as recorded in either or both logbooks and reports presented by observers. This information shall be communicated within six months of the expiry of the reporting period.
2. Fishing effort shall be measured in the following units according to the type of fishing gear deployed

Type of fishing	Effort measurement
Trawlers	a. Kilowatt*Fishing days b. Vessel*fishing days
Longliners	a. Gross tonnage*Fishing days b. Average number of hooks deployed*Number of deployments
Netters	a. Gross tonnage*Fishing days b. Average length of nets deployed*total soak time

3. Information shall be provided from logbook for all species caught from any hauls catching any quantity of deep sea species (Annex 1B of the Scheme):
 - Each quarter of the year
 - Each ICES statistical rectangle
 - Each type of fishing activity described in par. 2
 - Each zone or area
 - Depth of fishing
 - Landings and discards (discards where not collected by sampling scheme)
4. Data shall be submitted in the reporting format outlined in Annex 1.
5. Additional information may be provided in accordance with Annex 1.
6. Contracting Parties shall develop sampling plans for deep-sea species (including discards where necessary), and shall communicate them via NEAFC to ICES. ICES shall be asked to review the sampling plans and provide feedback to Contracting Parties via NEAFC.
7. Contracting Parties shall take account of evaluations of sampling efficacy and data quality made by ICES and shall modify their sampling programmes in order to attain a high standard of supply of scientific data for purposes of managing the fish stocks and the marine ecosystems and habitats.

NEAFC data reporting format

Column	Description	Mandatory/Optional	Comment
A	Contracting Party	M	

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B	Year	M	
C	Statistical rectangle	M	
D	Economic zone	M	
E	ICES Division	O	
F	Quarter	M	
G	Month	O	
H	Depth stratum	O	As a number 1 to 7, corresponding to 200 metre intervals, final category >1200 metres
I	Depth of fishing	M	Average depth (for each stat rectangle or depth stratum as appropriate)
J	Gear category	M	Trawler, netter, longliner
K	Gear subcategory	O	
L	Effort measure A	M	Either A or B or both, as in the NEAFC recommendation X
M	Effort measure B	M	Either A or B or both, as in the NEAFC recommendation X. This field is the preferred measure of effort for longliners and netters.
N	kW hours	O	kW hours fished; This field is the preferred measure of effort for trawlers.
O	GT hours	O	GT hours fished
P	Fishing time (hours)	O	
Q	Landings of species A	M	Species labelled according to FAO codes. All species caught must reported from any hauls catching any quantity of deep-sea species. Further columns for landings and discards by species (for all species, not just deep-sea species)
R	Discards of species A	M	
S	Landings of species B	M	
T	Discards of species B	M	
Etc			

5. VMS data

Contacts with the VMS database and information to inspection services are ongoing and in real time. All NEAFC Contracting Parties and communication parties report positions automatically. A lesser number are transmitting weekly catches automatically to the Secretariat. Those inspection services that are able to forward data from the Secretariat automatically and in real time to their inspection craft are still limited in number. The number of messages has stabilised between 300,000 - 350,000 annually.

The desire to improve timeliness and accuracy of catch statistics submitted from the statistical services of Contracting Parties under the Scheme led to a proposal for a facility to allow Contracting Parties to input monthly aggregate catch data directly into the NEAFC database via the NEAFC website. This facility has been established and has been tested on a trial basis in 2006.

6. Management of the North Atlantic Format (NAF) – The NEAFC Advisory group on Data Communication, AGDC

At the meeting of the AGDC in October 2006 the following information was given.

Norway uses the NAF for various purposes. New Norwegian legislation came into force in spring 2005 allowing Norwegian and foreign vessels to use electronic report systems (ERS) for catch and activity reporting in Norwegian waters if the Flag State principle is used. Norway has started testing electronic logbooks using NAF for reports. Norway has created some new two-letter codes and some new reports for these two systems. All codes should be on the NAF website.

For use in NAF, ISO alpha 3 codes for NEAFC and NAFO have been assigned and a new code has been introduced SEAFO (XSA). The Two-letter codes in relation to electronic logbooks allow a more flexible use of NAF. The same two-letter code can now appear more than once in one message if the special trailer code is used. The trailer is used as in the “old Danish” format. This may also point to solutions in other instances where special combinations of information are needed in a NAF report.

These new developments are at the moment being tested in Norway. Two other systems, with the EU and the Russian Federation, will be presented on the NAF website.

The codes are placed under Norway on the website and the new codes have also been added to the general code list. Codes should be universal not user specific in the NAF list. Specific codes and documents related to Partners are found under the individual NAF partners.

It was concluded that the NAF format seems to be appropriate for shorter messages. For larger amounts of data other solutions may have to be found. It was tentatively agreed to allow for other possible formats but, at the stage NAF is now, the NAF format with the proposed extensions may suffice for the information in electronic logbooks. If all the scientific information is to be included, it will not.

The AGDC looked at a comparison between NAFO and NEAFC use of catch at entry and exit codes, COE/COX. It was noted that NAFO-STACTIC had recommended that both Secretariats coordinate. The implementation will have consequences for the Schemes of Control and Enforcement but, being fully automated, no paperwork is involved. FMCs are not involved in the implementation and therefore it should be possible proceed rapidly. The technical implications were explained and attention drawn to compatibility of security and confidentiality between Secretariats and accuracy of data transmitted by FMCs.

Iceland has proposed daily catch reports and the different practical and technical aspects involved were explained. The practical aspects of the proposed changes were questioned as were the benefits from them. The data-element “catch” CA would have to be modified by all FMCs, so the “trailer” option referred to earlier would probably be the simplest solution.

7. VMS data made available to the scientific Community

ICES has for some years asked NEAFC to provide ICES with the VMS data in the NEAFC database. The NEAFC Commission has accepted this in principle and the practical details have been worked out between the parties. A specific request was received from ICES July 2006.

Three CDs with data for 2002-2005, according to specification, were dispatched to ICES in September 2006.

As the data are organised there are no problems in respecting the principles of confidentiality set out in NEAFC's Scheme of Control and Enforcement, attachment V (found at the NEAFC website www.neafc.org). However, it is important that the FMCs providing NEAFC with data and NEAFC Commissioners feel comfortable with the arrangement.

To secure this NEAFC proposed the following rules:

1. NEAFC offers to update the VMS data annually, adding on a new year early the following year. We will also be ready to discuss making other information in the database (weekly catch reports) available for analysis. As indicated at the MCAP-MICC meeting in April 2006, NEAFC will also report on its involvement in projects aiming at developing electronic logbooks etc.
2. The NEAFC VMS data are for the use of ICES in its role as provider of advice on fish stocks and fisheries. This means that it is available for ICES Working and Study Groups and the Advisory Committees. In the case of research of more academic nature by individual scientists recommended by ICES, NEAFC should be asked for permission.
3. ICES will keep a log of who has access the data and makes use of them. If used NEAFC should be credited in the reports. ICES will send a copy of the log to NEAFC in the beginning of September each year for the consideration of the NEAFC Permanent Committee on Control and Enforcement, PECCOE.
4. The data will be used for producing statistics, but not for tracking individual vessels or fishing operations. If there is a danger of that a very small number of vessels in a data sample makes it possible to identify individual vessels or fishing operations, the users of the data will show discretion and choose larger samples.

The VMS data is expected to be important for giving advice on closed areas and deep-sea fisheries.

8. Closing areas to fisheries

In 2004 NEAFC closed 4 seamounts and 1 larger area on the Reykjanes Ridge on a precautionary basis for the years 2005 – 2007.

In 2006 NEAFC closed 4 areas more on the Hatton Bank and the Rockall Bank to protect vulnerable habitats, especially cold water corals.

The closures have been limited in time, because better and scientifically based advice is pending.

9. The interface between science and management

To improve the dialogue between managers and scientists NEAFC in 2005 set up a new Permanent Committee for Management and Science PECMAS..

PECMAS will among other issues deal with the data provision of data to ICES from various sources that might support the scientific work and assessments.

10. Estimates of IUU catches

NEAFC has tightened the control of IUU vessels according to the Scheme of Control and Enforcement, especially by introducing A and B-lists and port control. In addition NEAFC Contracting Parties have invested much effort in following up on the activities of vessels on the NEAFC B-list.

In one incidence one vessel on the B-list was followed on a long journey from the NEAFC Area to Hong Kong, China. This was a reefer which had been observed receiving transshipments at sea from a group of IUU vessels fishing for pelagic redfish in the Irminger Sea and adjacent waters.

The vessel was refused entrance into ports in Europe, North Africa, North America, South Korea and Japan and finally ended in Hong Kong. Hong Kong authorities informed NEAFC that they had no domestic legislation to prohibited landings, but promised to inspect the landings and make the information available to NEAFC Contracting Parties.

As a result it has been possible to make rough estimates of the extent of the catches of IUU vessels of redfish. One estimate indicates a catch level of 20,000 tonnes in 2006, one third of the TAC.

NEAFC will consider developing procedures to compile data from inspections and observations on IUU fishing in more regular fashion in order to be able to provide the scientific community with these data for their analysis.

11. NEAFC's participation in projects

The IMPAST project has ended but VDS "shots" are still being requested by the European Commission's JRC. The 2006 summer campaign once again targeted the Irminger Sea.

The final workshop of the SHEEL project took place 30 June 2006. Although not a huge success, the project proved that it is possible to use E-logbooks and that data transmitted by them can be easily integrated by FMCs with data from other MCS sources.

CEDER had its inaugural meeting at NEAFC HQ in January 2006. The NEAFC Secretariat is a partner. It has had its second progress meeting in January 2007 and all partners continue to work according to plan. The Secretariat has contributed sample data from individual vessels (raw and unnamed data) to allow testing of draft models for track analyses.

At the January 2007 meeting the status was as follows:

- The first prototype was presented to be tested by the different “fisheries” and improved/adjusted according to comments;
- A web-based prototype is now available and project partners will test it with data from different fisheries;
- Analysis of relationships between measured parameters, fishing activity and regulatory limits;
 - Fishing effort and VMS
 - Spatial and temporal resolution determine the estimation of fishing impact
 - Effort and catch
 - Onboard sampling
 - Landings and quota uptake
- Further discussion on
 - Data collection
 - Reporting needs

12. Expert Consultations and Advice

The Secretariat was invited to take part in FAO’s “Experts Consultation on the use of VMS and satellites for fisheries MCS” in Rome in late October 2006. NEAFC’s experience in the integration of VMS with other real-time MCS tools was presented to the expert panel. Reference was made to other MCS tools like VDS (IMPAST) and the electronic logbooks (SHEEL).

NEAFC is cooperating with SEAFO and hosts SEAFO’s VMS database at present.

The Secretariat has participated in the “IUU Monitoring Network Workshop” convened by MRAG.

NEAFC has gained experience in 2006 with respect to exchange information on IUU vessel activities.

12.1 Evaluation of EU/SADC MCS Programme

Although not directly related to NEAFC a Secretariat member participated in the elaboration of the final evaluation report of the “EU/SADC Fisheries MCS

Programme”. This allowed exchange of views with government officials and technical assistants responsible for the implementation of the five year programme and its five national projects (Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania and South-Africa).

13. NEAFC Performance Review

At the 24th Annual Meeting of NEAFC 14-18 November 2005, the NEAFC Commission adopted the following decision:

‘Recalling the importance attached to evaluating the RFMOs, expressed i.e. at the March 2005 meeting of the FAO Fisheries Committee (COFI), the Commission recommends that a performance review of NEAFC is established.

The purpose of such a review is to provide for a systematic check of the performance of the organisation and its consistency with the NEAFC Convention, UNFSA and other relevant international agreements and instruments.

The Working Group on the Future of NEAFC shall develop assessment criteria and procedures for the performance review, including terms of reference for the review, in consultation if appropriate with FAO and other RFMOs. The procedures and terms of reference, together with administrative details, should be submitted to the Contracting Parties for decision by postal vote.

The performance review should aim to be presented to the Annual Meeting in 2006’.

Panel reviewed the data collection and sharing in NEAFC. The panel’s comments are the following:

The Panel has concerns regarding accuracy of data reporting due to issues such as area misreporting and discarding. There is only limited checking of data for accuracy by ICES or NEAFC and efforts directed at development of an independent verification system examining consistency of data from different sources would be useful.

The Panel has concerns regarding the lack of data related to deep-sea fisheries but notes that NEAFC is working to rectify this situation. Continuing these initiatives is important.

The Panel notes that although data were not split between the Regulatory Area and coastal zones prior to 2006, steps were taken by NEAFC and ICES to rectify this such that new sub-areas have been developed and incorporated into reporting schemes. This is seen as an important improvement.

There do not seem to be problems with the timeliness of data coming into NEAFC.

The Panel noted that there could be better coordination of all data into one database and suggests that NEAFC is well placed to do this because of availability of the VMS data.

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The Panel notes that NEAFC can only move at the pace of ICES regarding knowledge but can play an important role in supporting collection and dissemination of information in a timely fashion. In situations where there are data difficulties, NEAFC could take on a stronger role in facilitating solutions.

In addition NEAFC may find it beneficial to regularly follow up with ICES regarding its data collection recommendations to see how closely they are being followed and to what extent the data collected is proving valuable. During these discussions, other data collection issues may also be explored.

NEAFC Secretariat February 2007