



**NEAFC**

**ADVISORY GROUP FOR DATA COMMUNICATION**

**6 October 2010 London**

**Report**

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**Executive Summary**

**AGDC elected** (*agenda item 4*) Ellen Fasmer, Norway, as chair to succeed Gylfi Geirsson, Iceland.

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**AGDC discussed** (*agenda item 5*) quality control problems especially with messages received and sent by FMCs, but not received by the NEAFC database. No conclusion was made, but this may require further analysis. It was agreed that if the Secretariat cannot get to the root of this problem, it will produce a paper which can be considered later.

**AGDC noted** (*agenda item 5.1*) progress with respect to the introduction of electronic Port State Control forms and the testing that had taken place. A new round of testing will be started later this year. It could be technical possible to start electronic reporting in April 2011.

**AGDC discussed** (*agenda item 6*) technical questions referred to it from PECCOE, including a Russian proposal for cancelling messages/reports, unique vessel identifiers and the implications for the Scheme of the use of electronic logbooks.

With respect to the Russian proposal for cancelling messages/reports (*agenda item 6.1*) it was agreed to discuss an amended list of return error numbers, including the Russian proposal, by correspondence before the next meeting of AGDC.

With respect to the implications for the Scheme of the use of electronic logbooks (*agenda item 6.3*), it was agreed to call a one day meeting of the Group on 16 February 2011, in London, with the implications of the use of electronic logbooks as the only agenda item.

**AGDC discussed** (*agenda item 7*) the management of the North Atlantic Format. The NAF website is, under an agreement between the NAFO and NEAFC Secretariats, managed by NAFO. It has, however, not been updated for some time. NAFO had referred 3 technical issues to the AGDC: daily communications of catches and new data elements not included in the NAF codes, cancellation messages and introduction of FAO 3-alpha FAO product codes. The discussions will be communicated to NAFO.

**AGDC noted** the proposal that NEAFC PECCOE and NAFO STACTIC met back to back in early May 2011 followed by a meeting of the AGDC.

### **1. Opening**

The Vice-Chair, Mr Jacques Verborgh, EU, called the meeting to order on 6 October 2010 at 10.05 am in the meeting room of NEAFC HQ. He welcomed everybody, particularly George Campanis from the NAFO Secretariat and Trevor Fradsham from Fisheries and Oceans, Government of Canada as observers. He paid tribute to the outgoing Chair, Mr Gylfi Geirsson, who had made a big contribution to the work of the Group and had now been "promoted" to the Chair of PECCOE. All Contracting Parties and most reporting parties were present. The Chair reminded that this was a group of technical experts and everybody can speak freely in his or her technical capacity.

### **2. Appointment of rapporteur**

The Secretariat was appointed rapporteur.

### **3. Discussion and adoption of the Agenda**

The Chair went through the agenda. There were no further comments and the agenda was adopted.

### **4. Election of Chair**

At the last meeting neither the Chair, Mr Gylfi Geirsson, Iceland, nor the Vice-Chair, Mr Jacques Verborgh, EU, had been able to participate. Mr Gylfi Geirsson has since taken over the Chair of PECCOE and wants to terminate his chairmanship. It was felt that an election should not take place when neither of the Chairs was present and a decision was postponed to the next meeting of the Group.

The Chair asked for indications of interest to take over the chairmanship.

The Greenlandic representative proposed Ellen Fasmer, Norway, as the new Chair. She is an expert on the NAF and has participated actively in the work of the AGDC since its inception. Ellen Fasmer was elected by acclaim.

The new Chair took over and thanked the members of the group for electing her. The challenge now was the introduction of electronic logbooks and the need for harmonisation between NEAFC and NAFO. The agreements reached earlier in NAF gives the Contracting Parties of NEAFC and NAFO a common understanding of implementing catch and activity reporting and also a common list of detailed code information. She felt that this must be the foundation for further work. AGDC must be an active group taking care of what is agreed upon, but also trying to bring harmonisation and common understanding by paying close attention to new projects in the organisations.

### **5. Data communication**

The Secretariat representative introduced AGDC 2010-04 giving statistics on messages received by the database. He noted the problem of a significant numbers of refused messages, mostly because there is not the necessary quality control at FMCs.

The NAFO observer wondered about the intention of producing these statistics and whether NAFO should do the same.

The Secretariat informed that these statistics were produced in the first years of operation of the VMS system but there seemed to be little interest. Last year the AGDC asked for the statistics. The paper did not give any in depth analysis, but it gave some indication of problems. The Greenlandic representative wanted a similar analysis for each reporting party. This would bring the problems to the attention of FMCs. The Secretariat produces such documents for PECCOE. The NAFO observer could not see reasons for reporting if there were errors involved, other than to monitor traffic. NAFO follows up on errors for informational purposes and has a compliance report. The Secretariat offered to circulate the relevant PECCOE documents. (PECCOE-01-15) The EU felt that it was important to have an impression of the traffic because of the central role of the automatic computer

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system. This group looked at technical problems and PECCOE was looking at compliance. The NAFO observer asked whether it was the job of STACTIC or PECCOE to look into problems for individual Contracting Parties. The Icelandic representative thought in any case that the PECCOE documentation was of interest to AGDC. He informed that the present system can handle huge amounts of data. Iceland has to handle up to 2 million reports a day.

The Chair agreed that the Group needed the statistics in the paper, but pointed out that also the reports given NAK would have been interesting to have listed to get the total picture of the traffic of the reporting system at the NEAFC Secretariat. The Greenlandic representative wanted to break down the data on error numbers and FMC. The NAFO observer wished to be informed about what NEAFC decided to include, in the event that NAFO is unable to provide similar information.

There was a discussion on quality control problems especially messages received and sent by FMCs but not received by the NEAFC database. No conclusion was reached, but this may require further analysis. It was agreed that if the Secretariat cannot get to the root of this problem, it will produce a paper which can be considered later.

### **5.1 PSC electronic forms**

The Secretariat representative explained the way testing had been done over the summer. The application was tested in two stages between 2-12 August and from the Greenlandic trawler Sisimiut between 1-3 September. Testers were from the Netherlands, Greenland, Iceland, Denmark and the UK. (See AGDC 2010-05). She demonstrated the test version of the electronic reporting of PSCs on the projector screen.

The EC representative asked if this testing was sufficient. The Secretariat thought this was an ongoing process and called for more testers. The test site is still open and can be tried out by all interested parties. The Secretariat explained that the activity mostly involved Russian vessels and ports in Norway and the Netherlands. The Chair asked if we need a plan for the testing. The Secretariat informed that the first round of testing had been started by a Scheme letter. This will be used to improve the test version and a new testing round will be started later this year. The Greenlandic representative asked when the system would be operational. The Secretariat said that if all the necessary information is available and relevant decisions taken by Contracting Parties, it will be technically possible from April 2011. The Greenlandic representative asked if this system could be expanded to, for example, NAFO. The NAFO observer felt that it made perfect sense to learn from the NEAFC lessons and continue from there.

The EC representative asked about access to the reporting system. The Secretariat said it was open source; no licences are needed for the users. The EC representative pointed out that AGDC cannot make decisions. The approval of the system had to go through the formal NEAFC system.

The EC representative thanked the Secretariat for the presentation. He understood that the e-mails had only been routed to trusted authorities and the Secretariat confirmed this.

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This was fully in line with the present arrangements reporting on paper. The EC representative asked if it was possible to print out documents (for example pdf) from the various stages of the process. The Secretariat said that this would be possible. The EC representative asked who the intended users were, as this would also control quota uptake. The Secretariat informed that at the moment it will fulfil the Secretariat responsibility under Chapter V of the Scheme. There is more information in the system, but no decision has been made about that.

The NAFO observer commended the work done, which would streamline reporting. He noted that it illustrated the workflow. The Icelandic representative asked if it was possible to send a message from the flag state if 'yes' was not the answer to all the questions. The Secretariat replied that if there was a 'no' it should not be sent as authorised, but the information should be transmitted. We should probably use the word "confirmed" or "not confirmed". The EC representative thought that it important to sing from the same hymn sheet. Several parts of the Scheme were involved. He asked what was in the secure area and what was public. He raised the problem of signature on the digital report, there had to be a secure way to do this. According to the FAO scheme, there has to be information on the vessel and this information has to be supplied by the flag state. At the end of the day the skipper has to be sure that he has been authorised to land or tranship. The electronic system will allow us to compile information, but that is not the purpose at the moment. Users have to have the possibility of being able to save the end form. The Secretariat said it would be possible to print out the full form with the authorisation at the end of the process. The NAFO observer suggested that the electronic PSC workflow process demanded a different security system based on passwords rather than hand signatures. Therefore, there would be a need for a documented policy for managing passwords.

The EU-UK representative pointed out that the system would probably be more secure than the present system. The EC representative asked about details of security with Drupal software. The EU-UK representative asked about browsers, which could be a problem onboard vessels. The Secretariat said there were some issues, but it should be possible to use several browsers although it may be managed by local configurations. The EU-UK representative said it was important to involve as many vessels as possible in the testing. The Chair agreed. The Chair asked if the paper system would be the back-up. The Secretariat informed that, if faxes were used after the introduction of electronic reporting, it could be a problem for the Secretariat. There may not be the capacity to enter data into the database manually, unless fax communication would be the exception

The EU representative suggested that it should be indicated at the top of the form that this is a PSC1 or a PSC2 form. There were no more comments and the Chair closed the item. She felt that the progress has been received very positively and hoped that electronic reporting would be implemented as soon as possible.

### **5.2 Web based application**

The Secretariat presented the Web based application for the new electronic PSC system on the projector screen.

**5.3 Statistics WG – monthly catch statistics**

The Secretariat introduced PECCOE 2009-02-23 which describes the change in reporting in NEAFC of quota uptakes. This may involve some questions about codes.

There is no FAO code for a fish stock. The Statistics group has suggested a list of 3-alpha codes all starting with X to identify different stocks. STK was suggested to be used as the field code for the data element, but in order to harmonise with existing codes used by some Contracting Parties the STK should be replaced by SS. The Chair felt that using 3-alpha codes for stocks will not be a problem in reporting on statistic spreadsheets, but it would be wise to check with FAO species codes to find eventual double use of codes since these codes might also be used in the same element as FAO species codes. She also suggested that ZON should be replaced by ZO, since the code already exists in the Scheme.

**6. Documents referred by PECCOE for discussion**

**6.1 Cancellation of messages/reports**

Russia made a proposal - AGDC-03 rev 1 - and introduced the document.

When an FMC of a Contracting Party sends the Secretary any report or message via HTTPs it expects to receive the return message (RET) to confirm that the electronic report or message was received and accepted/unaccepted in the NEAFC database. If the RET message is not received by the FMC during a certain timeframe it attempts to resend such report or message to the Secretary again. As practice shows, in this case the FMC receives the RET message having NAK (Not Acknowledged) with misleading error number 102 (data value or size out of range) as the reaction even on a faultless repeated report or message.

**Proposal:**

To add the following new return error numbers to the table “Return error numbers” (Annex IX. D.2b of the Scheme):

Subject/Annex	Errors		Error cause
	Follow-up action required	Accepted	
Communication	105		Attempt to resend a wrong report or message
		155	Attempt to resend a correct accepted report or message

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The Norwegian representative supported the idea that we need codes for this, but suggested using other numbers, 502 and 503 instead of 105 and 155. The EC representative was gaining experience with the bilateral agreement with Norway but called for general harmonised error codes that can be used everywhere. The Chair said that there was development of more error codes and was important for FMCs that these were the same. The EC representative said this also applied to other types of errors. The Norwegian representative proposed a new text describing the error code 502. “This report is a duplicate and ad has got the status Not Acknowledged etc” and for 503 “This report is a duplicate and ad has got the status Acknowledged etc”.<sup>1</sup>

The Greenlandic representative supported this. The EU-UK representative asked if these reports are stored. The Secretariat said this was the case. The Icelandic representative noted that there were some fundamental differences between the error codes in the Scheme and the EU-Norway bilateral agreements. This should be noted when addressing harmonisation. The structure of the error codes have to be respected and adhered to. A number of details in the reasoning behind the error codes were then debated. One suggestion was to add a column on what happened to the message, which received a particular error code. It was agreed that the Secretariat would produce a table with an additional column. The Secretariat introduced the table. AGDC 2010-07. He suggested that error code 250 should be 201.

The Chair wondered what was really important here. The Russian proposal respected the structure. We could accept the codes proposed by Russia and the text used by EU-Norway. The EC representative would like to avoid a decision today, more reflection was necessary on what we want to achieve. This was also linked with how we deal with item 6.3. PECCOE has already had an extensive discussion on electronic logbooks. The Greenlandic representative proposed that the revised list should be forwarded to the May meeting of STACTIC and PECCOE. This would give time for reflection. The Icelandic representative drew attention to the fact that it had always been the intention that the Group could work remotely between sessions. He advised not acting too hastily.

The Chair suggested following this path and asked for contact persons for each CP. The Secretariat could improve the revised list by including the EU-Norway arrangement. This was agreed. The EC representative said that this should be taken together with 6.3.

### **6.2 Unique vessel identifier (UVI)**

The Secretariat informed about progress with respect to the Global Record of Fishing vessels and NEAFC’s role in setting up a trial database at IMO in cooperation with FAO.

### **6.3 Implications for the Scheme of the use of electronic logbooks**

PECCOE had discussed this matter yesterday. The Summary Records page contain a summary of these discussions. The Chair invited the Chair of PECCOE to introduce the discussions in PECCOE. He indicated that the main thing is whether the electronic logbook will take over reporting completely or whether they will create reports to the

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 1 in the EU -Norwegian bilateral arrangement.

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needs of NEAFC and NAFO. The Norwegian and EU logbooks are different in this respect.

Norway and the EU had analysed the various reports stipulated in the Scheme. The EC representative has set up a unit to look at all the requirements for reporting data. Simplicity and harmonisations are the key issues with the same lists in all systems. There should be a reduction in the numbers of reporting system to a single system without indicating any preference for any existing system. If so the electronic logbook would take care of all reporting requirements of fishing vessels, irrespective of fishing area. He would like to see some progress in international cooperation before the meetings in May 2011.

The Chair thought that there was a lot to gain by a harmonised system, but it involves a lot of work. AGDC could play an important role in this. The EC representative would like to put the EU-Norway arrangement on the table as a blueprint to jump start the Scheme, so it should not be too difficult for other Parties to conceive and the changes should not be that dramatic. There is now an opportunity to find a solution, before individual arrangements have locked the situation. The Chair of PECCOE said that the issue has already been sent to AGDC, no further mandate is needed. He stressed that the search for a unified system had always been the aim of the NEAFC Scheme.

The Greenlandic representative suggested that this item was kept on the agenda for the next meeting, by which time there will be more experience with electronic logbooks. The EU-UK representative felt that we have to act fast and working group meetings have proved to be more efficient than electronic correspondence. The Canadian observer informed that Canada has drafted a working paper on how to progress, which may be of interest. The Secretariat thought that the objective use of the NEAFC Secretariat database should be considered. The EU-UK representative noted that it had been indicated that the Secretariat already received data from electronic logbooks. This indicates that we can start the process towards a more unified system now.

The Chair drew attention to a Norwegian paper on electronic logbooks, which was circulated in April. She could not see a way forward before the May 2011 meeting as a result of this meeting. There are different opinions – those implemented by different Contracting Parties already and the needs of the RFMOs. The Chair then suggested that AGDC should meet before the May meeting of STACTIC and PECCOE to prepare information and a discussion paper for those meetings. The extra AGDC meeting shall only have one agenda item “the implication of electronic logbooks on the Scheme”. It was agreed to propose a one day meeting on 16 February 2011 at the NEAFC HQ.

## **7. Management of the North Atlantic Format (NAF)**

### **7.1 NEAFC / NAFO issues**

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These issues have been forwarded to the AGDC from STACTIC, NAFO, AGDC 2010-06. They include:

*1. Daily Communications of Catches - STACTIC WP 10/9 Rev 5. In this paper there are two new Data Elements that are not included in the NAF codes. These codes are CH - Chartering Flag and AE - Area of Entry. AGDC 2010-06*

The Greenlandic representative introduced the document. It was agreed in STACTIC to ask AGDC to scrutinize the field codes. NAFO uses catch on entry, catch on exit, daily catch report, catches crossing quota areas. COB is the “cross boundary” report. In NEAFC this problem arises in the Irminger Sea, a protected area inside and outside regulation. There were detailed questions on the information on Data Element, Field Code, Mandatory/Optional and Requirements for the field. NAFO has adopted this measure, but will take note of the comments made on the details of the measure.

The measure adds two new data elements to NAF, “Chartering Flag” (CH) and “Area of Entry” (AE).

The Chair asked why a new COB report was used. The NAFO observer explained that the on crossing a boundary report (COB) was created to provide additional information for inspectors. It was also a result of experience of practical problems in the former system. It was suggested by the Secretariat and by the EU-UK that it would be convenient for catch (CAT) messages to include catch date and time (DA/TI). This would only become relevant if, for some reason, the CAT message is not forwarded immediately. The group discussed the coding of the element, but did not agree. Code name DA/TI could be used for catch date and time, but this code is already used for transmission date and time in all reports sent from vessels (also CAT). To prevent confusion it would be better to use new codes for the new date and time element.

The Greenlandic representative welcomed all comments which may be used to amend the measure.

*2. Cancel message - STACTIC WP 10/15 Rev. Submit to the AGDC to solicit its views on how best to adopt the proposal for use in both NAFO and NEAFC. AGDC 2010-06*

The Chair noted that neither NEAFC nor NAFO have cancellation messages. NEAFC has the WIT report, cancelling notifications, NAFO does not. She informed that WIT is used in the bilateral EU-Norway arrangement. The NEAFC Secretariat thought that FMCs should have the possibility of cancelling and sending new corrected messages. The Greenlandic representative wanted to have a system with both a general cancellation message and a withdrawal message related to the national licence system. The Greenlandic representative informed that NAFO is looking at introducing the NEAFC notification and authorization.

A separate question is the cancellation of messages in general. The Norwegian representative felt that there was a need to allow for cancellation and correction of

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reports. The Norwegian system will allow the fishers to cancel activity messages referring to the record number of the message to be cancelled. The same is used for corrections. The Norwegian representative is in favour of allowing this, but suggests another way of doing it.

There was a general feeling that more work had to be done before going further.

The Chair summed up that this should probably have been done at the outset of the Scheme - we have lived with it for 10 years. She asked that if NAFO was in a hurry. The Icelandic representative pointed out that PECCOE already had a mandate with respect to this issue. The question was what the content of such a message should be. The Russian proposal in NAFO raises the same issue. The Greenlandic representative suggested that the issue is important. The Chair reminded that Norway originally raised this issue and would be willing to make a new proposal for the general cancellation message. For the cancellation of notifications NAFO will be advised about the NEAFC Scheme. The Icelandic representative said that we have to check that the NAFO system could understand the NEAFC message. The EU-UK representative suggested that vessel information was not necessary, record number and reference date should suffice when the FMC sends the cancellation message.

The NAFO observer felt that it may at this point to be enough to make clear to NAFO that the proposed solution would work, but not necessarily be elegant and a final solution.

The Chair concluded that PECCOE and STACTIC should be advised that the Russian proposal can be used. The Norwegian representative may propose a different solution. The Secretariat will amend the table for the cancel message format.

The NAFO observer asked if a new CR NAF data-element code could be created. The EU has informed that they use it internally only for sales notes, so it can be created.

*3. Product Form Codes - STACTIC WP 10/32. A proposal to introduce new product form codes into the "The NAFO observer CEM, Annex XX (c)". This could have technical implications of moving from a single alpha code to a 3 alpha code.*

The NAFO observer introduced the issue. The Greenlandic representative explained that STACTIC has agreed to introduce the 3-alpha FAO code for products list, but this will not be introduced until this has been accepted by NEAFC. The list is extensive. The Icelandic representative asked if this would lead to changes in data fields. The Chair had looked at it and the codes are only used in the production logbooks and these are only on paper. They will not cause any problems in the PSC system. The Icelandic representative thought that there were messages not included here. The NAFO observer noted that the product code are used in the OBR report, which is a daily report sent by observers reporting catch as a part of the special *Electronic reporting, satellite tracking and observers* part given in Chapter VII of NAFO/FC Doc. 10/1 Conservation and Enforcement Measures. In NEAFC they are not used in the electronic messages, PR Product code is therefore defined in Annex IX C2.

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The Chair concluded that it would not be a problem for NEAFC, at present, to introduce the 3 alpha codes. This should be updated on the NAF website, when NEAFC has adopted the change in the Scheme.

The NAFO observer asked about the line of command with respect to making changes to the NAF format on the NAF website. He wanted to discuss that. The Chair outlined the procedure. The NEAFC Secretariat explained the agreement with the NAFO Secretariat back in 2003. The NAFO observer said that they were interested in keeping the website up to date.

### **8. Any other business**

None

### **9. Report to the 2010 Annual Meeting**

Will be sent for comments a week after the AGDC meeting

### **10. Date and place of next meeting**

Canada raised the question of the dates with respect to NAFO time schedule. The next meeting will be on 16 February.

### **11. Closure of the meeting**

The meeting closed at 4:35. The Chair thanked participants for a productive meeting. The Greenlandic representative noted the importance of participation by the NAFO Secretariat and Canada as a NAFO Contracting Party. This was an important development and the back to back meetings would hopefully strengthen this trend.