1. Opening of the meeting

The Chair, Ellen Fasmer, Norway, opened the meeting and welcomed all participants.

The list of participants is Annex 1 to this report.

2. Appointment of the rapporteur

The Secretary was appointed rapporteur.

3. Discussion and adoption of the agenda

There had been small amendments to the original draft agenda which had been circulated before the meeting.

Agenda, as adopted is Annex 2 to this report.

4. Data Exchange

4.1. Review of EPSC

The Secretariat presented document AGDC 2013-01-16, which is an overview over the first two months of the PSC system being fully electronic. She noted that the system has mostly been working well. There have been a similar number of reports as before and no instances of faxed reports.

Some problems remain regarding designated ports, which have resulted in some ports being listed as not being able to process landing forms. However, the main problems that have arisen are with cancellations. Those who are not registered can make a form, but are not able to access them again to cancel them. In some cases this has led to more than one form being in the system for the same landing.

There was a discussion in which it emerged that the participants all had a positive experience of the electronic system. Regarding the inability of unregistered users to cancel forms causing several forms being in the system for the same landing, two possible ways to deal with this issue were identified.

Some participants favoured changing the procedures so that all users would have to register to use the system, perhaps with the introduction of a more basic registration option. They
could then have access to cancel any redundant forms. Other participants stressed that the system functioned very well with the option of unregistered users, and considered it inappropriate to change this user-friendly element to solve a problem that could be dealt with by making it possible for flag and/or port States to cancel forms. That solution would avoid solving the problem by creating a different problem.

It was noted that from a technical point of view, both conclusions would require an amendment of the system. Allowing port states to cancel would be a simpler change than setting up a new more basic registered access, but both would be feasible from a technical point of view. There was no consensus on which option would be preferable.

It was agreed to refer this issue to PECCOE and have them look at it. AGDC can formulate a technical solution to either approach, and will do so if PECCOE comes back with a preference.

4.2. Status of the VTI pilot project

The Secretariat presented the status of the pilot project testing online utilities for uploading Vessel Transmitted Information (VTI). The tests have not been on-going for long, only about 10 days, but the system is working and several types of reports can be sent through the website. In the final system, it will presumably be up to the respective Contracting Parties to nominate the people who will have access to this system.

There was a discussion on how the manually inputted information will fit in among the reports in the current system.

It was noted that there would be a need for some kind of time stamp for the input of information through the system, to enable it being tracked. At this point, it is not clear how the tracking will be and there are several options in this context.

The Secretariat noted that the problems that still need to be overcome, and the development that still needs to be done, are not major issues. The system could therefore be fully operational within a short time if the policy decision is made to make it operational. In this context it was noted that this would not require an amendment to the Scheme. However, as this would constitute a change in practices it would be appropriate to do this only on the basis of an explicit decision by PECCOE and the Annual Meeting to implement such a system.

It was agreed that PECCOE should be informed of these developments.

5. Documents referred by PECCOE for discussion

5.1. Identification of duplicates

The Secretariat presented document AGDC 2013-01-11, containing possible criteria for identifying duplicates. It was pointed out that duplicates result in information taken from the database being sometimes incorrect. If a vessel sends three reports with the same information, the extraction of the vessel’s catches from the database might result in three times the actual catches unless the duplicates are identified.

There was a discussion on the criteria in the document, and subsequently the document was revised. It was agreed that the revised version should be presented to PECCOE as the response from AGDC. This will be presented to PECCOE in a single document containing
the both this response and the response to the issue discussed under agenda item 5.2, as presented in document AGDC 2013-01-25. This is Annex 3 to this report.

5.2. Russian proposal to amend Annex IX.D 2b

The Chair noted that the document for this issue at this meeting was a revised version on a document that had previously been discussed at AGDC.

The Russian Federation presented document AGDC 2013-01-3 rev 1, which contains a proposal to amend Annex IX.D 2b of the Scheme on “Return error numbers”, to prevent the loss of correct reports and messages.

There was a discussion of the proposal, where there was agreement on the general idea being very good. However, there was a need to ensure that potential problems would not be created by this change. This included concerns regarding possibly undermining the showing of the sequences of messages and a lack of consistency with the timing requirements in the Scheme.

The discussion focused on finding ways of amending the proposal so it would avoid the possible problems that had been identified. In this discussion, it was noted that originally the NEAFC system had used the approach that getting any message was better than getting no message. There were problems with this as some FMCs did consistently not provide all the required information and the system was open to that. Therefore, it was decided that the system should reject a message if a COE report had not been received. However, this had not sufficed to solve the problem and it might be useful to look at a possible new approach. It was stressed in this context that any change would have to be based on getting better information than the current approach delivers.

Following the discussion, a new document was prepared, building on document AGDC 2013-01-3 and the discussions that had taken place. This was presented as document AGDC 2013-01-24.

It was noted that the document envisaged a result of “not acknowledged” when a message or report is not accepted.

There was a discussion on the new document, resulting in some revisions.

It was agreed that the revised version should be presented to PECCOE as the response from AGDC. This will be presented to PECCOE in a single document containing both this response and the response to the issue discussed under agenda item 5.1, as presented in document AGDC 2013-01-25. This is Annex 3 to this report.

6. Documents referred by STACTIC for discussion

The Chair noted that document AGDC 2013-01-21 contained a confirmation that NAFO had no issues for AGDC to discuss under this item at this meeting.
7. NEAFC ERS/Electronic logbook issues

7.1. Questions from Ad Hoc Working Group on ERS

The Chair presented documents AGDC 2013-01-18, report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on ERS (AHWGERS, a sub group of PECCOE) meeting in January 2013, and AGDC 2013-01-20, list of possible data elements in a future NEAFC ERS that was developed by AHWGERS.

Iceland made a presentation of a possible basic architecture of the future NEAFC ERS, as currently envisaged by AHWGERS, and answered questions on this. Among the issues raised at the discussion on the presentation was the need for a database at the NEAFC Secretariat after ERS is introduced, as the information would be available at the FMCs. Some delegates considered it unnecessary to store the information at the Secretariat, while others considered this important to ensure that inspectors can easily see the overall picture. Some stated that storing data at the NEAFC Secretariat could add possible errors to the data since corrections might not be done in the NEAFC database, only in the FMC databases.

Some delegates stressed that they did not consider it appropriate for AGDC to enter into a substantive discussion on the different elements, as this was an issue that PECCOE was working on. AGDC should only look at the specific technical issues that they had been asked to examine. Others considered that the technical nature of many of the elements in document AGDC 2013-01-20 made it appropriate for AGDC to discuss this and provide advice to the working group and PECCOE on best IT practices.

There was a lengthy discussion on how the NEAFC ERS should be structured. There was no consensus on how the structure should be, but it was noted that solutions based on pushing and pulling information would both be technically possible.

It was acknowledged that PECCOE will make the decisions on how to proceed. The role of AGDC will be to set out technical solutions to make it possible to implement whatever approach PECCOE decides upon.

The Chair pointed out that in document AGDC 2013-01-18, point 5.5, it is noted that AHWGERS expects all Contracting Parties to have an ERS system from 2015. It is also noted there that setting a timeframe for establishing a NEAFC ERS would not be possible until AGDC has discussed the technical details. She suggested that AGDC should point out to the working group and PECCOE that it will not be possible for AGDC to discuss the technical details until PECCOE has decided on some main principles of the ERS system for NEAFC. However, AGDC might consider the issue of approximately how long it will take to work out the details once PECCOE has agreed on a system design. One Contracting Party stated in AGDC that 2016 might be more realistic for all CPs to be ready to send ERS data to NEAFC.

It was noted that the earliest that a conclusion of PECCOE on ERS will formally be decided on will be at this year’s Annual Meeting. AGDC would therefore have to do some work on the technical details in 2014. Some time will be needed for the steps of finalising the technical matters, formulating the specifications, identifying the developers (probably through a tender) and letting the developers do their work.

Following this process, the FMCs would need to have time to implement the system. It was concluded that this should not be too difficult or time-consuming, and that the vessels would
hopefully not need much time to implement the system. All vessels would already be operating in their Contracting Party’s ERS system. The big change would therefore be the one for the Secretariat.

It was noted that it might be an optimistic time schedule to finish this all during 2014, but it was agreed that this should nevertheless be the aim that would be set, except that one did state that 2015 also might be needed. It was suggested that it might possibly save time in sending issues back and forth between PECCOE and AGDC if a joint meeting would be held during the development of the technical solutions. It was stressed that it was impossible to conclude firmly on whether the time schedule of starting the implementation in 2015 was realistic while PECCOE had not concluded on the design of the NEAFC ERS. The more complex the system would be, the more time it would take to address all the necessary technical issues.

The need for a testing period before full implementation will also make it a tight fit to finalise everything during 2014.

It was also noted that if this work is to be done in 2014, the 2013 Annual Meeting would have to prepare for it. This would not only include giving PECCOE and AGDC the relevant mandate, but would also include ensuring that the budget for 2014 included funds to do the necessary work.

The Chair pointed out that in document AGDC 2013-01-20, several data elements were marked with a “*” indicating the elements that the working group wanted AGDC to consider.

There was a lengthy discussion on what response should be given to the working group on these elements. Some delegates stressed that AGDC’s only task in this context was to consider if the codes for these data elements were appropriate. Nothing else should be done, as the development of the system as such was being done by AHWGERS and PECCOE and not AGDC.

Others considered that AGDC should use its expertise to provide advice that would ensure that the system was based on the appropriate use of the available information technology.

Some emphasised that the new ERS system should have a clear separation of the business and transportation layers. The current system did not have this clear separation, and the available documents indicated that the new NEAFC ERS might not either. This would create unnecessary problems for the future, such as when new data fields were added.

Each of the fields in document AGDC 2013-01-20 marked with “*” were considered individually. There was not consensus on the need to have record numbers and sequence numbers. Some found them redundant in an ERS that included the message unique identifier. Others considered them useful.

Regarding “address”, “record time” and “record date”, it was agreed that the codes suggested were appropriate. For “port”, it was agreed that UN LOCODE port codes should be used.

The Chair noted that it was difficult to conclude on what should be the marking for a report when it is not clear how the reports will be communicated (i.e. will they be pulled or pushed) or how they will be structured in their final version. There were still many loose ends, which made it complicated for AGDC to conclude on this.
7.2. NEAFC Secretariat experience with the EU system Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (FLUX)

The Secretariat presented their experience of FLUX. Two representatives of the Secretariat had held meetings with technical experts in Brussels on this issue. The Secretariat would do testing in this context in the near future and is interested in getting as familiar as possible with this software. It is expected that the Secretariat’s communication with EU FMCs will in the future go through FLUX.

It was noted that the FLUX is a system to transport data, with the actual content being irrelevant. This development was therefore relevant for NEAFC regardless of what the NEAFC ERS system will look like.

8. NEAFC Security and confidentiality issues

The Chair drew attention to document AGDC 2013-01-4, which contains the recommendation on adopting an Information Security Management System (ISMS) for NEAFC, which was adopted at the last Annual Meeting. She pointed out that the bullet points under Article 2 listed various guidelines and other documents, and that AGDC was expected to make most of these.

The Chair noted that significant work had already been done on this at previous AGDC meetings, and that the Secretariat had done even more work on this since the last meeting. There were therefore many drafts already available for AGDC to work on and eventually approve. The Chair pointed out that document AGDC 2013-01-5 usefully listed the documents that should be formulated.


There was a discussion on this document, which resulted in amendments being made. The final conclusion of the meeting on this issue was draft Definitions of Issues listed in the rows of the Data Security Matrix and the Security and Confidentiality Descriptions, as presented in document AGDC 2013-01-6rev1, which is Annex 4 to this report. It was agreed that AGDC will come back to this for final approval at the next AGDC meeting.

8.1. List of Documents to be formulated by AGDC only

8.1.1. Communication and operation Security Guidelines; Article 10 of rec 11:2013 and point 1.2.4 in AGDC 2012-03-06 Rev1

The Secretariat presented document AGDC 2013-01-7 containing a draft data transmission security matrix.

There were extensive discussions on the basis of the document which resulted in some elements from the document being removed to either be merged with other documents or become stand-alone texts. In such instances the text removed was put into documents that fall under other agenda sub-items. What remained in document AGDC 2013-01-7 was also revised on the basis of the discussion.

The final conclusion of the meeting on this issue was draft Communication and Operation Security Guidelines, as presented in document AGDC 2013-01-7rev3, which is Annex 5 to
this report. It was agreed that AGDC will come back to this for final approval at the next AGDC meeting.

8.1.2. Access control Security Guidelines; Article 11 and Article 6.2 of rec 11:2013 and point 1.2.5 of document AGDC 2012-03-06 Rev 1

The Secretariat presented document AGDC 2013-01-8, containing a matrix describing the access control for the NEAFC website.

There were extensive discussions on the basis of the document, where several amendments were suggested, including an extension of the notes to the matrix.

The final conclusion of the meeting on this issue was a draft Layout of Matrix describing the Access Control for the NEAFC website at April 2012, as presented in document AGDC 2013-01-8rev2, which is Annex 6 to this report. It was agreed that AGDC will come back to this for final approval at the next AGDC meeting.

The Secretariat presented document AGDC 2013-26 on subscribing users to the NEAFC website. It was explained that the document was built on the current practices that are reflected in document AGDC 2013-01-8rev2.

Some amendments were done to this document, following discussions at the meeting. The final conclusion of the meeting on this issue was a draft on Subscribing Users to the NEAFC Website, as presented in document AGDC 2013-01-26rev1, which is Annex 7 to this report. It was agreed that AGDC will come back to this for final approval at the next AGDC meeting.

The Secretariat presented document AGDC 2013-01-29, on access for external parties. This document had been formulated on the basis of discussions that had already taken place at the meeting on this subject, as a part of general discussions on access to the NEAFC website. There was therefore no need for further amendments to this document. The document, which is Annex 8 to this report, was the final conclusion of the meeting on this issue. It was agreed that AGDC will come back to this for final approval at the next AGDC meeting.

8.1.3. Business continuity management Guidelines; Article 14 of rec 11:2013 See point 1.3 of document AGDC 2012-03-06 Rev 1

The Secretariat presented document AGDC 2013-01-15, regarding business continuity management. It was noted that NEAFC has not had a major failure. While this does certainly not guarantee that a failure will not occur in the future, frequency is a factor in such a risk assessment.

There was an extensive discussion on this issue. Among the points that were made was the need for the final document to include a reference to a plan for how NEAFC would respond to a disaster, e.g. a fire ruining the office. The self-evident reality might be to relocate the server and have the staff work from home temporarily, but this might be explicitly stated.

It was also noted that the document was basically a description of the current business continuity management. That was considered as an appropriate place to start, but it was considered appropriate to build further on that in the final document.
It was agreed that the Secretariat will prepare a revised version, which would include the minor amendments that had been discussed. There was not sufficient time at the meeting to prepare the revised version. The revised document will therefore be circulated after the meeting, in good time for the next AGDC meeting. It was agreed that AGDC will come back to this for final approval then.

8.1.4. Physical and environmental Security Guidelines; Article 9 of rec 11:2013 and point 1.2.3 of document AGDC 2012-03-06 Rev 1

The Secretariat presented documents AGDC 2013-01-9 and AGDC 2013-01-13, containing respectively draft physical security guidelines and a matrix describing physical security at NEAFC. It was noted that these documents were based on the work of the work that had been agreed at the meeting of security experts the previous year.

No amendments to the documents were suggested at the meeting. They therefore constituted the final conclusion of the meeting on the issue of physical and environmental security guidelines. The documents are Annex 9 and Annex 10 to this report. It was agreed that AGDC will come back to this for final approval at the next AGDC meeting.

8.1.5. Responsibility for Assets; Article 7.1 of rec 11:2013

The Secretariat presented document AGDC 2013-01-14, containing a system description and inventory.

The Chair pointed out that this was primarily being presented for information, as it was a task for the Secretariat and not AGDC to prepare the final version of this document. AGDC would in the future take part in regularly reviewing this document. However, delegates were encouraged to make comments that might be helpful for the Secretariat in preparing a final version.

Following the discussion, a revised version of the documents was made, as presented in document AGDC 2013-01-14rev1. This is Annex 11 to this report.

The Secretariat introduced document AGDC 2013-01-28, containing a classification of data types in the NEAFC Secretariat. This had previously been a part of document AGDC 2013-01-7, but was eventually in its final form made into this stand-alone document. As the contents had already been discussed, no further amendment was suggested to the document. Document AGDC 2013-01-28 therefore constituted the final conclusion of the meeting on the issue of classification of data types in the NEAFC Secretariat. The document is Annex 12 to this report. It was agreed that AGDC will come back to this for final approval at the next AGDC meeting.

8.1.6. Human resources Security Guidelines; Article 8 of rec 11:2013

It was noted that formulating human resources security guidelines was a task for the Secretariat and not for AGDC. It was noted that a draft had not yet been formulated, but a final version of a draft is expected to be presented to the Annual Meeting this year.

8.1.7. Terms and Conditions for use of services; Article 6.2 of rec 11:2013 and point 2 of document AGDC 2012-03-06 Rev 1
The Secretariat presented document AGDC 2013-01-10, containing terms and conditions and other legal information normally provided by websites. It was noted that NEAFC is not bound by UK standards, but that it would be beneficial for its operation to comply with generally applicable rules. It was further noted that the description of the organisation in the document was primarily intended for NEAFC’s service providers, who sometimes find it difficult to classify NEAFC’s exact status as it is neither a company, UK government agency nor a charity.

No amendments to the document were suggested at the meeting. The final conclusion of the meeting on this issue was a draft Terms and Conditions and Other Legal Information Normally Provided by Websites, as presented in document AGDC 2013-01-10, which is Annex 13 to this report. It was agreed that AGDC will come back to this for final approval at the next AGDC meeting.

8.2. List of Documents to be formulated by AGDC together with PECCOE

8.2.1. Risk management; Article 3 of rec 11:2013 and 1.1 of document AGDC 2012-03-06 Rev 1

The Chair presented document AGDC 2013-01-22, containing the Terms of Reference for the various NEAFC committees and working groups. It was noted that none of them were explicitly mandated to carry out risk assessments. It was also noted that it would not be necessary to amend their Terms of Reference, as Recommendation 11:2013 was an overarching recommendation and its Article 3 explicitly stated that NEAFC committees and other subsidiary bodies shall prioritise the analysis and evaluation of risks.

It was agreed that it would be useful for these bodies to get guidance from AGDC in this context, as it might not be clear to all of them exactly what was expected of this analysis and evaluation of risks.

It was agreed to advise NEAFC committees and other subsidiary bodies that this would only constitute considering if their work involves information security management. If they do not consider this to be a part of their work, then no further analysis and evaluation is needed. If they do consider this to be a part of their work, then they need to carry out an analyses and evaluation of those elements, including the effects of a lapse in security. The Secretariat will assist them in this work.

It was also agreed that AGDC would provide more detailed advice to PECCOE in this respect, as it was foreseeable that the conclusion would be that information security management was a part of PECCOE’s work. AGDC will revisit the content of a more detailed advice to PECCOE at a future AGDC meeting.

8.2.2. System acquisition, development and maintenance Security Guidelines; Article 12 of rec11:2013 and 1.2.6 of document AGDC 2012-03-06 Rev 1

The Chair presented document AGDC 2013-01-12, containing a draft by PECCOE on how Appendix 1 to Annex IX – Confidential treatment of electronic data – would be amended to make the newly agreed provisions on security and confidentiality an integral part of the Scheme.

There were lengthy discussions on this issue, and several revised versions of the document were presented. The final conclusion of the meeting on this issue was as presented in
It was agreed that together with the final version on the document showing amendments to Appendix 1 to Annex IX of the Scheme, there should be another document on amendments to Article 14 and Annex IX B, to ensure consistency. The final conclusion of the meeting on this issue was as presented in document AGDC 2013-01-27rev1, which is Annex 15 to this report. It was agreed to send this document to PECCOE as a working document. AGDC will continue to work on this at its next meeting, on the basis of the work of PECCOE.


It was agreed that this Recommendation should be repealed when the guidelines under Recommendation 11:2013 are adopted by the Commission. The relevant parts of Recommendation 13:2005 would be incorporated into the relevant guidelines.

8.2.3. Information Security Guidelines; Article 5 and 7.2 of rec 11:2013 and point 1.2 of document AGDC 2012-03-06 rev 1

Under this agenda item, there were discussions on whether Articles 5 and 7.2 of Recommendation 11:2013 were addressed sufficiently in the current drafts. No document specific to this agenda item was formulated. Rather, the discussions under this item contributed to the work on documents that are dealt with under other agenda items. This includes documents AGDC 2013-01-7rev3, AGDC 2013-01-8rev2 and AGDC 2013-01-29.

8.3. Security system administrators

The Chair pointed out that Article 6.1 of Recommendation 11:2013 states that security system administrators shall be appointed. She noted that the Recommendation was already in force, but the question was whether it would be appropriate to nominate them as soon as possible or rather wait until all the guidelines and other relevant documents have been formulated and adopted. The answer to that question would largely depend on if they were considered to have a role in formulating these documents.

There was a discussion on this where the conclusion was that the security system administrators would not really have a practical role until the documents envisaged by Recommendation 11:2013 have been formulated. Rather than giving them a role in formulating the documents, the Contracting Parties would provide the Secretariat with access to their IT security experts, as necessary, during that work.

It was therefore agreed that AGDC would advise the Contracting Parties that it would not be necessary for them to appoint security system administrators until after the guidelines and other documents envisaged by Recommendation 11:2013 had been adopted. In practice, this was likely to mean that this could be postponed until after the Annual Meeting in November 2013.

9. Management of the North Atlantic Format

9.1. NEAFC issues

No points were raised under this agenda item.
9.2. NAFO issues

The Chair noted that document AGDC 2013-01-21 contained a confirmation that NAFO had no issues for AGDC to discuss under this item at this meeting.

9.3. Issues raised by other NAF users

No points were raised under this agenda item.

10. AGDC as a joint NAFO/NEAFC group

The Chair presented document AGDC 2013-01-17, the report of the joint NEAFC/NAFO ad hoc working group on the possibility of making AGDC a joint body of NEAFC and NAFO. She pointed out that a new name for a successor to AGDC had been expected, and that there had been no surprise in the proposed new name including the word “joint”. However, replacing “data communications” with “data management” had not been as foreseeable. She noted that the term was clearly, and appropriately, defined in the outcome of the joint NEAFC/NAFO meeting. However, she stated that there may be a reason for some concern as the term “data management” did not on the face of it indicate as technical a group as “data communication” indicated. It would be unfortunate if making AGDC a joint group of NEAFC and NAFO would result in its technical nature being undermined.

It was agreed that it might be preferable for the name of AGDC’s successor to include the word “technical” to ensure that its technical nature is preserved. This could be done by using the phrase “technical data management” in the title in place of “data management”.

11. Any other business

No points were raised under this agenda item.

12. Report to the 2013 Annual Meeting

The draft report was circulated on 19 March 2013, and the final report was adopted on 27 March 2013.

13. Date and place of next meeting

It was agreed that it would be useful for AGDC to meet again in June. This would serve two purposes better than having the next meeting in October. Firstly, it would make it possible to respond to any issue coming from the upcoming STACTIC meeting before the NAFO Annual Meeting in September. Secondly, it would be an opportunity to try to finalise the documents regarding data security and confidentiality, while maintaining the option of meeting again before the NEAFC Annual Meeting if one meeting proved insufficient to finalise these document.

It was agreed that after the revised versions of the documents regarding data security and confidentiality were circulated following the current meeting, AGDC members should present comments in writing. There would then be an opportunity for the Chair, assisted by the Secretariat, to revise the documents again on the basis of the comments received. It should even be possible to have two such rounds of written comments and revised versions
before the next meeting of AGDC. The aim would be to have all substantive points presented in writing before the meeting, so that no new points would be raised at the meeting itself.

The Secretariat noted that the meeting rooms at NEAFC headquarters had been reserved for coastal State meetings in June. These meetings were likely to take place during one week, but might be spread over more weeks and the exact dates had not been fixed. It was therefore agreed not to fix a firm date for the next meeting, but to agree on a preferred date and a backup date if the meeting room at NEAFC headquarters turned out not to be available on the preferred date.

It was agreed that the preferred date to have the next meeting would be 13-14 June. This would be the date of the meeting if the NEAFC meeting rooms are available, with 25-26 June as backup dates. If neither dates end up being available at NEAFC headquarters, a decision will be made through correspondence on either another date or a different place for the meeting.

14. Closure of the meeting

The Chair thanked everyone for a fruitful meeting and wished them a safe journey home.