1. Opening
The Chair, Ms Ellen Fasmer, Norway called the meeting to order on 22 May at 10 am in the meeting room at NEAFC HQ. She welcomed the participants. All Contracting Parties were present. The Chair reminded delegates that this was an advisory group of technical experts and everybody could 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 draft agenda. She pointed out that STACTIC had not referred any issues to AGDC, and that there was therefore no need for an agenda item on issues referred to AGDC by STACTIC. Point 8 of the Agenda was sub-divided into 8.1. “AGDC as a joint NAFO/NEAFC group” and 8.2. “Information by the Secretariat on new projects”

4. Data exchange
4.1. Overall view of 2011

The Secretariat introduced document AGDC 2012-02-03, providing an overview of 2011.

The Secretariat pointed out that work was ongoing regarding the new certificates. Ireland and Latvia are having problems connecting, but the Secretariat is working with them to solve the issues.

The Secretariat presented document AGDC 2012-02-04. He noted that there are problems with FMCs sending reports. These problems are most prominent in the redfish fisheries.
The representative of the EU stated that there were some issues in this context that he would like to discuss with the Secretariat, but thought it better to do that in a private discussion in the margins of the meeting than to take time from the meeting for this purpose.

The representative of the Russian Federation stated that, when information such as that in document AGDC 2012-02-04 is presented, it might be useful to include diagrams, as is normally done in NAFO.

The Secretariat introduced document AGDC 2012-02-05. He noted that some of the problems identified seem not to be addressed by the FMCs for various reasons.

The representative of Norway pointed out that there seems to be a common mistake in reporting fisheries of species that the vessel is not formally authorised to fish.

The Secretariat confirmed this and pointed out that this is normally due to catches being reported for unregulated species, e.g. prawn in the Barents Sea. Formal authorisations are not issued for such species and this is therefore shown as catches of a species the vessel is not authorised to fish. He noted that this was one of the situations that raised the question of how minor issues should be dealt with.

5. Documents referred by PECCOE for discussion

5.1 NEAFC – Security and confidentiality issues

The Chair stated that, under this item, she intended to do two things: firstly sum up the results of the recent meeting of experts on this issue, and secondly to work on drafting concrete documents.

The Chair explained how the process has gone so far, and in particular highlighted document AGDC 2012-02-10 as being important regarding the results of the experts’ meeting. She noted that the document had partially been drafted at the meeting itself and partially later by the Secretariat on the basis of discussions at the meeting.

The Chair introduced document AGDC 2012-02-08, noting that this was a reply from her to the Chair of PECCOE. She had tried to pick out what had been decided. She pointed out that Annex 1 of document AGDC 2012-02-08 had all the bullet points from the document that AGDC received last year (PE 2011-03-32 and AGDC 2011-03-08). She considered that the issues raised had been handled in a proper way at the meeting of experts.

The Chair introduced document AGDC 2012-02-11, noting that this was the reply from the PECCOE Chair. She pointed out that PECCOE approved of AGDC continuing to work on the basis proposed, but considered that AGDC should only work on point 4 of
Appendix 1 to Annex IX of the Scheme as PECCOE (with the Secretariat) will do the work on points 1-3 of this appendix.

The report from the meeting with Security and Confidentiality Experts (AGDC 2012-01) was made as a report to this AGDC meeting and presented by the Chair as document AGDC 2012-02-09.

Having completed her overview of the process so far, the Chair introduced document AGDC 2012-02-13. This is a draft recommendation which she suggested the current meeting of AGDC should discuss and improve. She suggested that the document be put up on a large screen, and that AGDC work on it as a drafting group. This was agreed.

The Chair pointed out that the result of the drafting exercise should be a first draft of an overarching NEAFC recommendation on data security and confidentiality, which would be based on the ISO standard. She noted that it had been PECCOE which had asked AGDC to do this, so the draft would be sent to PECCOE rather than directly to the NEAFC Commission although the final version would of course require adoption by the NEAFC Commission. That final version would then presumably be made publicly available on the NEAFC website, and needed to be detailed enough to serve its purpose well, while at the same time be in a form which could be understood by non-experts.

AGDC worked together as a drafting group to formulate a draft overarching recommendation, on the basis of document AGDC 2012-02-13 and ISO Standard 27001. The result was a new document which was circulated along with the draft report of the meeting, to be adopted in parallel to the report. Its final version was therefore not circulated at the meeting or given a meeting document number. The new draft recommendation is called “Recommendation on an Information Security Management System (ISMS) for NEAFC”.

In formulating the draft recommendation, the approach used was to set the framework and decide on what additional documents would have to be formulated. This exercise therefore did not include formulating all relevant documents, but rather deciding on the general principles and on what would need to be formulated before the total exercise could be considered completed.

Much of the time during the meeting was spent formulating the draft recommendation. This report will not detail all the discussions that took place, as the results of the discussions are available in the form of the draft recommendation. However, in the remainder of the report of the proceedings under this agenda item, several issues that were discussed are highlighted. Priority is given to the issues that may require some contemplation beyond the results presented in the draft recommendation.

Iceland raised the issue of whether the recommendation should be primarily directed towards the Secretariat, or towards all the work that is carried out within the framework of NEAFC.
The Chair noted that this was one of the fundamental questions that had to be answered. She noted that, in addition to the Secretariat, the actors within NEAFC were not only the Contracting Parties, but also others such as external service partners. There were therefore several entities to consider. She noted that the scope needed to be clearly addressed at the outset.

The result was a wide scope, rather than focusing only on the Secretariat. However, the internal processes of the Contracting Parties were not included within the scope, as for such processes data security and confidentiality was considered to be an internal issue for the respective Contracting Parties.

Iceland pointed out that it might be useful to state the objective of the recommendation, as a reference point for what the other provisions are aiming to achieve. Following this, the drafting of the opening paragraphs was amended to take account of the need to clearly state an objective and have that objective reflected in the scope and substantive provisions of the recommendation.

There remains an issue to potentially be looked at regarding exactly what should be considered to be the “objective”, what should be considered to be the security “policy” and what should be considered to be the substantive provisions that implement the policy in order to achieve the objective.

The Chair pointed out that the existing rules of NEAFC include the existence of security system administrators and that the draft being formulated not only continues this practice but also increases their role. However, the exact position of the security system administrators within NEAFC has not been addressed very clearly. It might be appropriate for any necessary meeting of these administrators to take place within AGDC, or at the margins of AGDC meetings, rather than having them constitute a de facto new NEAFC committee. It might be useful to give some more thought to the issue of how the security system administrators operate and who they report to.

In discussions on asset management, the EU made the point that references to assets should be to the Secretariat’s assets, rather than NEAFC’s assets, to ensure that it is clear that this is not intended to include assets of individual Contracting Parties. The Secretary pointed out that, technically speaking, there was no such thing as an asset of the Secretariat, but only an asset of NEAFC. The Secretariat managed NEAFC’s assets, rather than independently having any assets itself. The issue of what wording would be best in the context if referring to assets is something that might be considered further.

The Secretariat pointed out that the framework that was being constructed would have to have clear links to the existing security matrix. This might best be achieved by taking it into consideration when developing the Guidelines that the overarching recommendation calls for. The same would apply for the current physical security matrix.

Iceland raised the issue of operational requirements, such as if the system should run 24 hours a day. She noted that such requirements would have to be a part of any contract
with outside service providers. The NEAFC rules would have to ensure that such contracts made it clear what was expected of the providers. The Secretariat noted that this might best be addressed in the context of formulating the risk analysis and the Guidelines. All contracts with service providers would be in accordance with the conclusion of that work.

In discussions on an external audit, it was noted that this would not necessarily have to be carried out by an external company following a tender. It could also be done by a group of experts nominated by the Contracting Parties. The main issue would be the actual expertise of the auditors and that they are not the same as those that run the system on a day to day basis.

As the draft recommendation calls for various other documents to be formulated and adopted, there was a discussion on who should formulate them and who should adopt them. As these documents would be of a somewhat technical nature, it was concluded that AGDC would presumably be the most appropriate body to formulate them. For the documents to have a sufficient status within NEAFC, it was concluded that it would be necessary to have them formally adopted by the NEAFC Commission. However, it may be useful to consider these points further.

5.2 NEAFC – ERS/Electronic logbook issues

The Chair noted that there will be a special PECCOE meeting on this issue in June. She pointed to document AGDC 2012-02-15, which provides the guidelines on the future work of PECCOE on this issue. She noted that the bullet points in the document were from the 2011 Annual Meeting of NEAFC.

As PECCOE will be looking at this issue in more detail in June, there was not considered to be a need for AGDC to enter into detailed discussions on this topic at this meeting.

5.3 Implementation of point 1 of Rec. 10:2012

The Chair introduced document AGDC 2012-02-16. She noted that this was the first time that AGDC has been given back something on which it has advised due to it not being practical to implement in the Scheme.

The Secretariat explained that the advice which AGDC had provided, and the NEAFC Commission had adopted, did not fit the text of the heading in Annex IX 2b Return Error numbers in the Scheme. He stated that there was a need to either change the Scheme or the text of the recommendation. Neither of these was a task for the Secretariat without a clear mandate, and the issue had therefore ended up with AGDC.

The Secretariat explained what kind of coding it is possible to send in a RET message from the NEAFC system. It is not possible to send an error code (RE/155) together with the status code acknowledged (RS/ACK) as described in the Rec 10:2012. It might be
useful to change this, but that has to be discussed as a separate issue later because such a change will also impact on the systems in the different CPs receiving RET messages.

The Secretariat also explained how this raises the issue of duplicate reports, without there being a definition of what should be considered a duplicate. The last table in document AGDC 2012-02-16 provides a look at what can be considered a duplicate. The duplication of reports (i.e. CAT, COX, TRA) make it necessary to look manually rather than use the automatic process that the database should be able to provide, in order to avoid double, or triple, counting of the declared catches or transhipped products.

There was a discussion on this issue and the Secretariat was asked to use that as the basis for a new document. The Secretariat produced a new document, document AGDC 2012-02-17, that was agreed upon.

It was agreed that the Chair should inform the NEAFC President of the conclusion and suggest to him that he may take the initiative of calling for a decision by postal vote, so that this may enter into force as soon as possible and replace the flawed conclusion that was agreed at the last NEAFC Annual Meeting.

6. Review of implementation of online PSC forms

The Secretariat introduced document AGDC-2012-02-07. This showed that the uptake of the digital PSC forms at the end of April was up from the 22% presented to PECCOE to 25%. She noted that this was a move in the right direction, albeit not a very rapid move.

The Secretariat pointed out that the PSC form has an “other areas” field. The original intention was to use the space for vessels that were landing catches both from the NEAFC Convention Area and from other areas. However, there were cases of vessel filling in a PSC even if there are no catches from the NEAFC area, but only from “other areas”. This was clearly redundant, as the NEAFC PSC is only intended for vessels that have at least some catches from the NEAFC Convention Area.

The Secretariat raised the issue of sending catch information in the body of an email, which can be useful in the event of a system crash, but perhaps goes against the advice of the security experts.

The Chair noted that this issue comes down to whether this should be considered as “data transmission” or not.

Norway pointed out that catch information for each individual vessel is public information in Norway and therefore not a big confidentiality issue for Norway at least.

The EU stated that AGDC should highlight that there is a security and confidentiality issue in this context and that there is a risk as email is not a very secure way of sending data. He considered it appropriate for AGDC to point that out.
The Secretariat pointed out that the use of email would be as a replacement for fax, and that this therefore did at least not result in a less secure way of transmitting data than what has been used before. However, he agreed that for the future, it would be appropriate to look at possible improvements.

7. Management of the North Atlantic Format (NAF)

7.1 NEAFC issues

No issue was raised under this agenda item.

7.2 NAFO issues

Document AGDC 2012-02-12 is a report from NAFO, which *inter alia* points out that there are no issues to be raised under this agenda item.

7.3 Issues related to other NAF users

No issue was raised under this agenda item.

7.4 AGDC web based intercessional work

The Chair pointed to the relevant parts of document AGDC 2012-02-12, in particular regarding the use of the AGDC SharePoint website. She noted that the website makes it possible for AGDC members to upload documents and comment on documents, without needing to send several group-emails.

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) noted that he had tried to register for the website, but had not been successful.

The EU stressed that AGDC should have all documents in one place. He stated that using the SharePoint website could actually become confusing if it was not very clear what documents were on what website. He further noted that there was perhaps a reason to hesitate before embarking on the use of the SharePoint website, to wait for a conclusion on both the direction taken regarding ERS and the future status of AGDC and a possible joint group of NEAFC and NAFO.

The Chair stressed that all official documents would continue to be kept in one place in the way they have previously. The SharePoint website would only be used for formulating drafts. The point would be to have a more practical way of working together to formulate documents that are work in progress, not to have more websites to keep finalised documents. The previous method of sending group emails for all comments and amendments was not considered as effective as SharePoint in joint drafting exercises. She further noted that SharePoint would be only for AGDC and the developments regarding
ERS and the status of AGDC should not affect the adoption of more effective ways of working on draft documents.

Iceland welcomed the use of SharePoint, but pointed out that its settings might be changed to prevent all registered users from getting an email notifying them of every comment and amendment made. In some cases this was simply to inform about the correction of a very minor error. She suggested that the one making a comment or amendment might be asked to decide on a case by case basis if it was appropriate to send an email.

The Chair revisited the issue of whether AGDC members were comfortable with going ahead with using the SharePoint website for the development of draft documents between meetings of AGDC. After some discussion, the conclusion was that there should be no change regarding where finalised documents are kept. However, while documents remain work in progress, the SharePoint website should be used to formulate the draft.

The Chair noted that the draft documents that the Secretariat would make in the context of data security and confidentiality could become a test of whether AGDC members would actually use the SharePoint website. The website will be used for their formulation and development, but if this way of working does not prove to be effective, perhaps AGDC will go back to the previous way of sending various versions of drafts by email. These documents will in a way constitute a pilot project for developing documents that are still work in progress.

The Chair further noted that she would ensure that NAFO, which administers the SharePoint website, will have the email addresses of everyone who should have access to it.

8. Any other business

8.1 AGDC as a joint NAFO/NEAFC group

The Secretary introduced document AGDC 2012-02-06, regarding the issue of making AGDC a joint group of NEAFC and NAFO, which was prepared for the NEAFC Heads of Delegation and presented at this meeting for information. He further pointed out that the PECCOE Chair will soon formally inform the NEAFC Heads of Delegation that PECCOE has concluded that it would be appropriate to make AGDC a joint group of NEAFC and NAFO and that the most appropriate way of doing this would be for NEAFC to initiate setting up a joint working group to address the practical issues that need to be resolved.

The Secretariat further noted that STACTIC had also discussed this issue, but that the NAFO Members that are not NEAFC Contracting Parties would wish to wait for NEAFC to make a move.
The EU noted that one side-effect of the change would be a likely increase in the travel costs associated with attending AGDC meetings.

The Secretary pointed out that this was one of the issues that was raised in document AGDC 2012-02-06, and further noted that this issue was being raised here for information rather than for decision.

8.2 Information by the Secretariat on new projects

The Secretariat noted that it is working with DG MARE on the FLUX Project. He stated that this had very limited costs for the Secretariat but that the issue was to have someone from outside the normal EU Member States to test the new data transmission system.

The Secretariat noted that he had participated in a workshop with EU FMCs. Not all EU FMCs had attended, but the exercise was considered to have been very useful. He noted that one outcome had been a request to have a pilot project where FMCs would have an online facility to upload all reports (i.e. all communications which are not automatic either sent under Articles 12 and 13 or under Article 16 of the Scheme). Part of the development is already done, but the Secretariat will work on making this possible as a pilot project. The reasoning is that, although ERS is coming, improvements in the quality of data should still be made in the meantime. The Secretariat expects this to be up in the summer and wants to have a preliminary report of the experience at the next PECCOE meeting.

The Secretariat explained that this would work by the reports being submitted by filling in an online form.

Iceland pointed out that this could also become a useful as a contingency plan.

The Secretariat agreed, but noted that this would not be intended to be a full replacement for submitting reports. To submit all reports in this way would presumably be beyond the capacity of most FMCs. However, for FMCs that do not send many reports, this could become the most used method of submitting reports.

The EU asked if the intention of the report to PECCOE on how the pilot project has gone would be to have PECCOE officially sanction the method as a way of putting data into the database.

The Secretariat stated that it would be wise to see how things go before the next steps are planned. However, he noted that this would actually be a way of submitting data by using HTTPS as foreseen under Recommendation 13:2005, so there would not be a requirement to change the Scheme. Agreement in PECCOE would therefore be sufficient and there would not be a need for a formal Scheme amendment proposal to the NEAFC Commission. He further noted that it might still be useful to have the NEAFC Commission make a decision on methods of communication, if only to finally remove X25 as an option eventually amending recommendation 13:2005.
9. Report to the 2011 Annual Meeting of NEAFC

The Chair stated that the draft report would be distributed shortly, and that delegations would be given an opportunity to suggest amendments before the report was finalised.

10. Date and place of next meeting

The Chair noted that PECCOE may ask AGDC for advice that should be ready before the October meeting of PECCOE. In this context she pointed to the fact that in June there will be an extraordinary PECCOE meeting on ERS and a meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Port State Control.

Rather than confirming the time for the next AGDC meeting now, she suggested that the option of an extraordinary AGDC before PECCOE meets in October should be kept open. Furthermore, that the option of meeting for two days in October should also be kept open. The plan for the next AGDC meeting to be a one-day meeting in October should therefore be seen as tentative rather than a firm decision. This was agreed.

11. Closure of the meeting

The Chair thanked everyone for a fruitful meeting and wished them a good journey home. She closed the meeting at 14:45.