ERS (03) : AHWG on Electronic Reporting 2018

Tuesday 5 June 2018 to Wednesday 6 June 2018

REPORT

1. Opening of the Meeting

1.1 The Chair, Gylfi Geirsson - Iceland, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. He noted provision had been made for a further meeting in September; progress at this AHWG would determine whether the additional meeting was needed.

1.2 All Contracting Parties were represented at the meeting. The list of participants (Doc. AHWG-ERS 2018-03-02) is annexed to this report.

2. Appointment of the rapporteur

2.1 The Secretariat was appointed as rapporteur.

3. Discussion and adoption of the Agenda

3.1 The agenda was agreed as circulated in document AHWG ERS 2018-03-01.

4. Continued work on Proposed Amendments of the Scheme

4.1 Scheme

4.1.1 Intersessional Comments to the Draft Scheme

4.1 The Chair introduced the document on ‘Amended Articles NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement’; AHWG ERS 2018-03-04, which included the latest drafting proposals on the earlier document AHWG ERS 2018-02-10.

4.2 In discussion:

- the term fishing operation from the definitions (Article 1.v) was removed. Instead the term fishing operation would also have to be adapted to address situations when the gear is not taken on board and integrated with the provisions on haul-by-haul reporting in the descriptive annex;

- on Article 9.8; no agreement was found on the reference to availability of logbooks to inspectors;
on Article 9.9; the reference to reports was removed and the information on coordinates put into a separate point; Article 9.10

The Chair and some Contracting Parties noted that the remit of the Working Group with regard to drafting on the reporting of all species caught under communication of fishing activities (Article 12.1), had been agreed at the AM 2016. The European Union referred to the text endorsed in the AM 2017 and indicated that it was not in a position at this stage to agree to changes regarding that part of the text in the AHWG and the discussions would have to continue to find appropriate solutions. In this context, the Chair noted that the text of the Scheme at the AM 2017 had been clearly marked as for “Information only”. One aspect discussed was whether reporting all species, including those under the current de minimis of 50kg applied by the EU, should be linked to clearer language on whether or not infringements were likely to apply to such small amounts of catch. The AHWG noted that the European Union would raise this issue at the policy level at PECMAC/AM. The European Union also pointed out that the NEAFC Convention does not cover highly migratory species regulated by ICCAT.

No agreement was found on Article 13.2, the ability to correct transhipment declarations;

On Article 14.4, information to masters on status of the report received by NEAFC, Contracting Parties agreed to the text, once it was established that the aim was to help masters by keeping them informed rather than creating new scope for infringements.

4.2 Annexes

Intersessional Comments to the Draft Scheme Annexes

The Chair introduced document AHWG ERS 2018-03-06, a draft ‘Amended Annexes of the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement’, which was a reorganised version of AHWG ERS 2018-03-05 (in turn an updated version of AHWG ERS 2018-02-10). This draft was accompanied by an explanatory document by the Secretariat (AHWG ERS 2018-03-07).

The AHWG discussed the need for clarifying the approach to the status and presentation of the ‘new’ and ‘old’ Schemes during the ERS transition period, and deciding the timing of any switchover although no decision was made in this regard. The European Union explained that it expected the reporting requirements to be the same for all Contracting Parties whatever the means by which reporting was to be provided.

The working group was able to agree a series of amendments to the annex IVa (Electronic Fishing Log Book Recordings) and these changes were reflected in rev2 of AHWG ERS 2018-03-12 and will be added into an updated version of AHWG ERS 2018-03-06 (draft amended annexes).

It was agreed that references in the Annexes to discarding should be presented in the same way as references to other catches until a final decision was taken on the issue.

The EU indicated that size groups should be retained in the catch descriptions as an optional element. This was noted by the Group.

The European Union presented its proposals on the Annex IV of the Scheme in its documents AHWG ERS 2018-03-08, reintroducing the concept of headers to the table as a familiar means of grouping items. Norway also presented its proposals for Annex IV in AHWG ERS 2018-03-12. It was agreed to merge the two approaches suggested by the European Union and Norway, which give additional mapping of the data between the Scheme, NAF format and the implementation of UN/CEFACT, for the drafting process. These additional columns will be removed in the final versions.
5. **Continued work on the FLUX UN/CEFACT implementation document for the NEAFC Context**

5.1 **Intersessional Comments to the Draft Implementation Document**

5.1 The AHWG examined the draft implementation plan (AHWG ERS 2018-03-09) in detail. Following discussion, the European Union provided a working document on chapters 5 and 6 of the implementation document.

5.2 A new version of the text (AHWG ERS 2018-03-09-rev1) was agreed without any remaining track changes. This document would be further updated by EU on the basis of discussions of the rev1 versions at the meeting, circulated to Contracting Parties to raise any outstanding items and in order to see if a further meeting of the AHWG was required. If an additional meeting was required this would need to be in time to allow PECMAC to make any formal proposal to the Annual Meeting. The current allocation for a potential AHWG was 11/12 September.

6. **UN/CEFACT**

6.1 **Status of the implementation of UN/CEFACT FLUX within the EU**

6.1 The European Union updated the AHWG on current status of development of the UN/CEFACT FLUX transportation layer within the EU. The FLUX tool and fleet vessel registers were progressing well, with most Member States exchanging FLUX VMS information. One Member State had also indicated its readiness to act as a volunteer for pilot processes with NEAFC. The proposal for the new control regulation included provisions for haul by haul reporting and removing the 50kg reporting de minimis, so this would be a harmonised approach to NEAFC.

7. **Status report by the Secretariat**

7.1 **Progress of ERS preparation**

7.1 The Secretariat briefly updated the AHWG ERS on progress in terms of preparation for the launch of ERS. The user interface was continuing its iterative development with input from Contracting Parties. For the VMS pilot exchange of data, the NEAFC host servers and data base servers had been extended, with the pilot ready for end June with all testing having already been done. Once certificates were in place the pilot will go into production (i.e. using real data). A shut down test was being carried out on the pre-production version.

A provisional implementation for the exchange of VMS in production (i.e. live) was discussed at the April meeting (AHWG 2018-02-24) and AHWG will need to decide, either at the September meeting or before whether or not this is a sufficient basis to continue and expand the initial pilot on production data.

8. **Timelines for the implementation of ERS in NEAFC**

8.1 The Secretariat explained that it was continuing to develop a working document on the timeline to the ERS launch including notable dates and the software development plan. The ERS pilot had been planned for May but had been rescheduled for June.

9. **Questions to JAGDM**

9.1 None; but see below under AOB
10. **Report to the September 2018 Meeting of PECMAC**

10.1 The report will be drafted by the Secretariat and circulated to the Chair and the Participants for comments on 12 June 2018. The final version of the report was adopted on 19 June 2018. The Chair would present to PECMAC’s September 2018 meeting a summary of this working groups’ conclusions.

10.2 The Secretariat reminded AHWG that there would need to be a cut-off point prior to the annual meeting in order for a functioning version of the ERS to be ready for launch in June 2019. This was discussed at the April meeting and in JAGDM. The Secretariat reminded the meeting that this implied a “feature freeze” by September 2018, for the initial June launch of a new system however after this time a list of additional features for future updated versions of the ERS system post June 2019 could be created. If any further changes to the system were suggested at the AM 2018, this would be very likely to lead to a delay in the planned launch date. Thus a realistic discussion of costs and benefits of any further change would be required should this arise.

11. **Any other business**

The JAGDM advice on the draft business continuity plan was provided to the April AHWG meeting where it was approved. The Secretariat introduced document AHWG ERS 2018-03-11 which was the consolidated text of the Business continuity plan, with the changes approved in April. Norway suggested this be further amended to give an accurate description of the help desk services which would be available.

11.1 **Identification of final documents**

11.1 AHWG ERS did not identify any documents at its meeting as needing to be marked restricted for public access. However it noted that the documents were mostly working documents so unsuitable for release as final versions.

12. **Date and Place of the next meeting**

12.1 The next meeting would take place in London on the 11 and 12 September 2018, if required.

13. **Closure of the Meeting**

13.1 The Chair advised that a list of remaining items to be discussed will be circulated after the meeting. Participants are asked to review the list and forward comments and further addition to the Secretariat before Monday 18 June 2018.

13.2 The Chair thanked participants and the Secretariat for good progress made at the meeting. He wished all a safe journey back home.