1. **Opening of the meeting**
The Chair, Gylfi Geirsson, Iceland, opened the meeting and welcomed the delegates.

2. **Adoption of the Agenda**
The agenda was adopted in the form that had been circulated before the meeting.

3. **Mandate from the Annual Meeting 2012 regarding ERS**
The Chair noted that the mandate of the group had been adopted by the NEAFC Annual Meeting in November 2012, as presented in document AHWGERS 2013-01-03, which had originally been Annual Meeting document AM 2012-83.

4. **Review of the output from the June 2012 meeting of PECCOE**
The Chair pointed out that document AHWGERS 2013-01-04 was a list of data elements. It had been made by using the data elements of the current system as a basis, and then removing those that were not considered relevant for ERS and adding others that were considered relevant for ERS. This had also included going through logbook recordings.

The Chair pointed out that document AHWGERS 2013-01-05 contained the draft ERS data that should be available for MCS purposes. These were mainly headings regarding the type of data that is needed for these purposes.

It was noted that authorisation reports could also be looked at in this context, albeit not necessarily in the very first step. VMS data was also considered relevant.

It was noted that the difference between time critical messages and other messages had been stressed. VMS, entry, advance notice of transhipment and advance notice of leaving the area were all considered as time critical messages.

It was noted that PECCOE and the Working Group would not need to go into the details of the technical solution regarding ERS. The aim was not to have a conclusion where all Contracting Parties operate identical systems, but to focus on what data was needed. That would include focusing on what data should be instantly available and what should be available in a less time critical way. The work was based on the assumption that the data would be transferred in XML format.

5. **Continuation of work according to the mandate from the NEAFC 2011 Annual Meeting**

5.1. **Define appropriate data requirements (control and enforcement, catch and activity reporting), which are to be included in a NEAFC ERS**
A Russian document comparing the data elements included in different systems was introduced (AHWG ERS- 2013/01/06). Russia explained that in making the document, an effort had been made to include only the elements that might be useful for NEAFC. It was agreed that it provided a good and useful overview.
It was noted that the intention was not to make an ERS system for the Contracting Parties, but rather to determine what data would be needed from them and how they communicate that information. The issue of how the Contracting Parties communicate with their vessels was not really of interests, as such.

Nevertheless, it was considered useful to ensure that participants understood how domestic communication was set up. In this context, there was a presentation on the Faroese ERS system.

It was agreed that the work within NEAFC should be on the basis of the official logbook being at the FMC. The logbook on board the vessels would be considered to be a draft until it was sent to the FMC, where the legally valid document would be kept.

There was a lengthy discussion on how data should be sent and the role of the central system at the Secretariat. No final conclusion was reached, but it was agreed that the technical details should be formulated by AGDC rather than PECCOE or the Working Group.

It was pointed out that a key reason why all the required data should be pushed to NEAFC was that otherwise no one would have the full picture of the activities in the Regulatory Area. All the required data should be pushed to and stored at the Secretariat, and any pulled data would be pulled from there. A separate issue would be if the information should be pushed to or pulled by inspectors.

There was a discussion on the need to give inspectors access to information on the whole fishing trip, within and beyond the Regulatory Area. It was suggested that while only information from activities in the Regulatory Area would be systematically sent to the NEAFC Secretariat, the system could include the possibility for inspectors to pull all the relevant data about the vessel since it last left port. The relevance of this should in particular be seen in the light of the inspectors currently having access to the logbook on board the vessels, but the future system being based on the official logbook being at the FMC.

Other delegations considered that only the information on the Regulatory Area, and the information that would be forwarded when a vessel enters the area, would be relevant. This type of pulling mechanism would be more relevant for bilateral fishing agreements than for NEAFC. However, it was acknowledged that even if the initial NEAFC system did not include this feature, it might well be developed as an addition to it later. It was therefore considered sensible to ensure that the design of the system included the possibility of inspectors pulling information not only from the Secretariat, but also from the FMCs.

5.2. Define the requirements and the necessary accessibility of relevant information from the NEAFC ERS for inspection purposes during inspections at sea

There was a point by point discussion regarding the different elements in document AHWG ERS - 2013/01/04, which lists the different data elements that might be required in the new system.

The current messages, including SEN and SEX, would not be included as such, but the information contained in them would form a part of the data communicated through the ERS system.
The priority for the work was considered to be to identify what information from the vessels would be communicated to the Secretariat. It was noted in this context that some of the data will have to be communicated as reported, but other data will be deducted from the already available information. For example, the system would include data on the exact position of the vessel and there would therefore not be a need for the master to enter information on what ICES area the operation is taking place in, even though the ICES area would be a part of the required data. The ICES area would be deducted from the information on the position of the vessel. Likewise, from a vessel’s call sign the system could deduct different information such as the name of the vessel, the flag State, the type of vessel, etc. This information would therefore not have to be communicated to the Secretariat, but would simply be deducted by the system on the basis of the already available information.

The meeting formulated a new document on the basis of document AHWG ERS - 2013/01/04. Different points were deleted and added, in the discussions. Document AHWG ERS - 2013/01/08 rev1 is the final version of this new document, and was considered to be a key output of the meeting.

There was a discussion on how acknowledgements would be used within the system. It was pointed out that the master is responsible for ensuring that his vessel’s information is communicated to the Secretariat. He should be in a position to know if there is a fault in communicating his vessel’s data to the end point. It would therefore be useful to have acknowledgements not only to the next level (i.e. that the data has been received by the FMC) but throughout the system (i.e. acknowledgement to the vessel that the Secretariat has received the data).

There was a discussion on whether it would be sufficient for the data from the Secretariat only to go to the Contracting Party with an active inspection presence, who would then deal with data transfer to the inspectors, or whether the Secretariat should also communicate this directly to the inspection platforms. Sending data to the Contracting Party was considered essential, e.g. to enable better planning of inspection operations, but it was considered potentially helpful also to have the information communicated directly to the inspection platforms from the Secretariat. The possibility of inspectors pulling data from the Secretariat would mean that the system would in any case be designed to include direct communication from the Secretariat to inspectors, i.e. a 24/7 access for inspectors to the database at the Secretariat.

5.3. Consider how appropriate additional data for statistical and scientific purposes can be included in the NEAFC ERS

The meeting examined document AHWG ERS - 2013/01/07, which contains the input from PECMAS on additional data. The PECMAS input puts the possible additional data into three different categories, A for general information, B for gear type and C for additional information that could be of benefit for the science community in order to evaluate the information.

Some doubts were raised regarding the relevance of some of the information, e.g. it was pointed out that engine power does not necessarily determine the actual towing power of a trawler.

However, it was noted that most of the domestic logbook requirements included the elements in categories A and B. It was therefore considered feasible to include these data elements in
the NEAFC ERS system, even if they were not all needed for inspection purposes. The main issue in this context that had not been concluded on within the Working Group, but was called for by PECMAS, was having information on a haul-by-haul basis.

Regarding the elements in category C, it was noted not all this data was usually a requirement in domestic logbooks. It was agreed that it would not be sensible to include as a NEAFC requirement elements that were not required for inspection purposes and were not required in domestic logbooks. Rather, the NEAFC system could be designed to make it possible to accept this additional information in cases where it was voluntarily communicated.

It was pointed out that all the information that was collected in this context would be available to the national authorities, who could make the information available to ICES without communicating it to NEAFC first. Additionally, the information gathered by NEAFC would be limited to the Regulatory Area, while the different Contracting Parties would have comprehensive information on their vessels activities for all areas. The added value of gathering this information in NEAFC was therefore not necessarily clear.

It was agreed that the Working Group should keep this issue open, as further consideration was necessary on whether it would significantly add to the information available to scientists if this was included in the NEAFC ERS system. It was nevertheless concluded that the design of the system should enable the transfer of information directly from the database to ICES.

5.4. Define how the flow of data should be organized, and the role of the Secretariat in this process, including resource implications
The basic architecture for the flow of information in the system was discussed as follows:

- Entries will be made into the electronic logbook at sea, and the information required by the flag State would be forwarded to the FMC. It would be up to the Contracting Parties to decide on exactly how this would be done.
- The official electronic logbook (i.e. the legally valid document) will be at the FMC, rather than on board the vessel.
- The FMC will forward/push to NEAFC all the information that is required for NEAFC. This will not necessarily be all the information that the FMC receives from the vessel, as national requirements may include additional elements.
- The NEAFC Secretariat will push all time-critical information to Contracting Parties with an active inspection presence in the Regulatory Area, and possibly also directly to active inspection platforms.
- Other information (i.e. other than time-critical) that is sent to NEAFC will be kept at the Secretariat and will be available to be pulled by inspectors.
- The system design will include the possibility of inspectors pulling additional information from the logbooks at the FMCs, although this would not necessarily be a functioning part of the system at the outset.
- The system will include acknowledgements of messages received throughout the system rather than only to the next level, e.g. so a vessel will know if its data has been received by the Secretariat but not only by the FMC.
- The system design will include the possibility of transferring data directly from the database to ICES.

Iceland volunteered to make a schematic picture outlining this basic architecture, which will be circulated to members of the Working Group before its next meeting.
No conclusions were reached regarding the details of the resources the Secretariat would need to operate a system with this basic architecture.

5.5. Develop a timeframe for the implementation of the system
It was noted that previously the year 2015 had been pinpointed as the time when all Contracting Parties would expect to have a fully operational domestic ERS system. No new information was presented in this context.

Regarding the time needed to set up the NEAFC system, it was agreed that until AGDC has had a discussion on the technical details it would not be possible to come to a conclusion on the timeframe.

6. Identification of Articles in the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement that may be affected by introduction of a NEAFC ERS
There was a lengthy discussion in what parts in the Scheme might need to be amended in the context of introducing a NEAFC ERS. This included going Article-by-Article through the Scheme and its Annexes. The conclusion was as follows.

Articles considered as certainly needing to be amended:
Articles 9, 12 and 13 and Annexes 4, 8 and 9.

Articles considered as possibly needing to be amended:
Articles 1, 5, 11, 13, 14, 16.2, 16.4, 18, 19, 28, 29, 34, 35, 36, 38 and 41 and Annexes 2, 10, 12 and 13.

Norway volunteered to update on this basis their previous document on draft amendments to the Scheme. The revised version would be a basis for discussions at the next meeting of the Working Group.

6.1. Drafting new and/or amended articles to the NEAFC Scheme of Control and Enforcement
This task was not undertaken at this meeting.

7. Report to the October 2013 meeting of PECCOE
The report of the meeting was adopted through correspondence following the meeting.

8. Any other business
No issues were raised under this agenda item.

9. Next meeting
It was decided that the Working Group would meet again on March 7-8, at NEAFC Headquarters, i.e. immediately following the next meeting of AGDC.