INFORMATION PAPER FROM NORWAY
REGARDING SELF-ASSESSMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FAO VOLUNTARY
GUIDELINES FOR FLAG STATE PERFORMANCE

At the Annual Meeting of the NEAFC Commission in 2017, it was agreed that the Contracting Parties shall carry out self-assessments in accordance with the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance (the Flag State Guidelines) and report to PECMAC in 2019. In this regard, we would like to inform PECMAC that Norway has established a working group, which is currently in the process of finalising a self-assessment of Norway as a flag State.

The working group is comprised of five members in total; two from the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, two from the Directorate of Fisheries and one external advisor.¹

The following mandate has been given to the group:

*The Working Group shall provide a systematic examination of the Performance Assessment Criteria 6 to 38 in the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance. The Working Group shall conduct the assessments in accordance with the Guidelines paragraph 45. The examination shall include:*

- A description of the guidelines
- An evaluation of how Norway has implemented the guidelines
- References to relevant national legislation
- A description of possible deficiencies or areas of improvement, and how this could be done.

The working group started the assessment by going through the various criteria in the Flag State Guidelines one by one, discussing whether and to which extent, the relevant requirements have been established in Norwegian legislation and management systems. Based on this first examination, each criteria and the relevant Norwegian legislation was scrutinized more thoroughly by the group, assessing whether Norway is fulfilling its responsibilities as a flag State.

A draft report has been prepared by the group. However, some further consultations with relevant authorities is necessary before the report can be finalised and shared with NEAFC Contracting Parties.

It has been noted by the working group that several of the criteria in the Flag State Guidelines address nuances and overlaps of the topics to be assessed. Hence, in the draft report, cross-references are made in order to avoid repetitive text. Furthermore, in a few instances, the content of a specific criteria was unclear to the group. This might be, however, due to the particularities of the Norwegian management system.

According to the findings of the working group, Norway has taken multiple actions in order to fulfil its flag State responsibilities. The relevant provisions of global binding instruments and measures adopted by regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) to which Norway is a member, have in general been incorporated into domestic legislation and management systems. However, the group has found some lack of clarity and deficiencies in a few regulations, which need to be rectified.

The report from the working group will be submitted to PECMAC once it has been finalised.

¹ Working Group participants: Specialist Director Gunnar Stølsvik and Senior Adviser Ingrid Vikanes from the Ministry of Trade Industry and Fisheries, Specialist Director Terje Løbach and Senior Adviser Hilde Ognedal from the Directorate of Fisheries, and Professor Tore Henriksen, Faculty of Law, the Arctic University of Norway.