Recommendation on Business Continuity


14.[2] Business Continuity Plan for the FLUX Communication Network

OVERVIEW

The Business Continuity plan describes how the communication between the Parties shall be organised in the situation when data communication channels are interrupted.

1. TERMINOLOGY

Transportation layer (TL): the electronic network for fisheries data exchanges used by all Contracting and Cooperating Non Contracting Parties (CPC) to exchange data in a standardised way.

Central node: a node acting on the TL network as an intermediate node connecting several endpoints.

Note that the EU Member States will be connected to the NEAFC node via the EU central node (operated by European Commission).

Endpoint: a Party that is connected to the TL network and is active for exchanging data with other endpoints. NEAFC and CPCs are end points of this system.

2. FALL-BACK PROCEDURE

Any Party who becomes aware of any failure in the transmission of data, including non-receipt of messages or receipt of invalid reports, shall immediately initiate the fall-back procedure by informing the other party (recipient or sender) of the problem, using any communication means available.

The fall-back procedure shall also apply during maintenance periods of a central node or endpoint.

The party causing the problem must take the necessary actions to correct the situation without undue delay.

Once the problem has been resolved, the responsible Party shall immediately inform other involved Parties.
2.1. **Problems on sender end-point**

When a technical failure occurs on the sender end-point and the sender can no more transmit messages, all messages that have to be delivered to a receiver shall be stored until the problem is solved.

In case of urgency and on request by any Party receiving data, the Party responsible for sending data shall use other communication means (email, secured FTP, etc.) to transmit urgent messages.

After repair of a system the sender shall transmit unsent messages as soon as possible on TL.

2.2. **Problems on receiver end-point**

When a technical failure occurs on the receiver end-point and in case of urgency and only if agreed between Parties exchanging data, the Party responsible for sending data can use other communication means (email, secured FTP, etc.) to transmit urgent messages. Otherwise, the Parties should hold all the data exchanges with that end-point until it becomes available.

After repair of a system, all held data should be transmitted immediately.

2.3. **Problems of a central node**

In case of problems of a central node, the Parties should hold all the data exchanges with that central node during this period.

Once the central node is back online, all held data should be transmitted immediately.

3. **MAINTENANCE**

3.1. **Scheduled downtime**

Normal scheduled system maintenance operations have to be performed regularly.

For the central node and because its availability is critical for all Parties on the TL, a normal maintenance operation should not cause an unavailability period of more than 3 hours.

For the endpoints a scheduled maintenance downtime should be no more than 4 hours.

Any Party scheduling the maintenance shall inform all other Parties at least 5 working days in advance by using any electronic means available.
In case of emergency or force majeure situations, the maintenance operation may be performed without respect of the prior notice delays mentioned here above. The notification in that situation needs to be sent prior to the downtime effectively taking place.

3.2. Unscheduled downtime

Unscheduled downtime occurs when the system goes down unexpectedly. These downtimes may occur at any time and vary in length depending upon the reason.

The downtime period should normally be less than 8 hours, while in case of exceptional circumstances (i.e. IT infrastructure out of business due to a disaster, etc.) the availability should be restored as soon as the conditions permit it.

As far as possible, the responsible Party shall give an estimate of the expected downtime period. When the downtime is ended, the responsible Party shall immediately inform other involved Parties by using any electronic means available.

4. COMMUNICATION

The communication procedure described here shall be followed to exchange information between Parties in case a fall-back procedure is initiated or there is a maintenance going on at a central node or end-point involved in the data exchange.

In these situations, human intervention is required and information is communicated by email. Contact details for each Communicating Party and NEAFC will make these available via the website.

4.1. Communication between Parties

The communication should cover business and, if deemed necessary, also technical questions directly related to the data exchanged.

Each Party shall ensure that the first reply is given as soon as possible, but not later than within 1 working day. It can be a simple acknowledgment of the receipt, but should indicate an estimated timeframe, when the issue is expected to be resolved or addressed.

4.2. Communication with the NEAFC helpdesk

For practical reasons, the communication language is English. The NEAFC helpdesk will have a dedicated system for handling requests for Acceptance and Production systems which is well publicized to Contracting Parties.
Any communication with the helpdesk should include the following:

- The contracting party/member state who is raising the issue
- Whether the issue relates to the Acceptance or Production environment.
- A one-line summary of the issue.
- A more detailed description of the issue.

For each subject a separate request has to be sent. Email should contain at least the brief textual explanations of the communication reason. NEAFC helpdesk shall acknowledgment of the receipt as soon as possible.