1. Opening of the meeting
1.1 The Chair, Thord Monsen, Norway, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. All Contracting Parties were represented.

2. Appointment of the rapporteur
2.1 The Secretary was appointed as rapporteur.

3. Discussion and adoption of the agenda
3.1 The agenda that had been circulated before the meeting (document PE 2019-02-01) was adopted.

4. Scheme of Control and Enforcement
4.1 Overall compliance evaluation – 2018

   4.1.1 Port State Control - Overall implementation evaluation

   4.1.2 Compliance report 2018 to the Commission
4.1 The European Union and Iceland presented their updated/amended annual reports on control and enforcement (document PE 2019-02-39 Rev1 and PE 2019-02-33 respectively).

4.2 Discussion briefly covered the details on cases, noting the views of the European Union that there was a general need to ensure penalties imposed by all Contracting Parties were sufficiently rigorous and that taking no action or issuing warnings for serious infringements was sending a wrong signal to the industry.

4.3 Under this item the Secretariat presented document PE 2019-02-13 which analyses the distributions of inspections of landings or transhipments of fish at port by Contracting Party. This had been requested at the previous PECMAC meeting.

4.4 In discussion, the Contracting Parties thanked the Secretariat for the analysis which was found to be useful overview. It was noted that the Faroe Islands had not reached the inspection benchmarks for landings of frozen fish in 2018. The Contracting Parties discussed the distribution of inspections on vessels from the different Contracting Parties, noting that it was
difficult to conclude on the reason for the identified differences and noting that inspections should be risked based. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) reassured PECMAC that they had taken the necessary measures to increase their inspection means.

4.5 PECMAC noted that that there was one Contracting Party with more than 10 fishing vessels in the Regulatory Area for 152 days in 2018, compared to 36 days with inspection presence in the Regulatory Area. The Russian Delegation was asked to confirm the figures provided.

4.6 **PECMAC agreed to add the new tables to the compliance report.**

4.7 The Secretariat presented an information paper (PE 2019-02-21) on catch reports by vessels without authorisation. These issues related to technical problems and an administrative error, and had been discussed at the earlier PECMAC meeting.

4.8 The discussion focused on where the responsibility lay for reporting such problems and whether such issues should be included in the Compliance Report. Some Parties underlined their view that such issues should appear in the national reports on compliance, as fishing without a valid authorisation was a serious infringement and the failure to issue authorisation and notification was in contravention with Articles 4 and 5 of the Scheme. They regretted that the explanation provided in the document was too succinct and did not allow having a good understanding of issues identified.

4.9 Some Parties invited Denmark (in Respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) to update their compliance report for 2018 in regard to the Authorisation issue. This was declined by Denmark (in Respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland).

4.10 **PECMAC could not agree on whether such failures due to technical/administrative problems should be included in the Compliance Report. It was agreed to note the issue in the report from the PECMAC meeting and it was suggested that the Faroe Islands provide a document with factual explanations. The Secretariat was asked to look into how to resolve any technical issues that may interrupt the authorisation process.**

4.11 The Secretariat presented an information paper (PE 2019-02-22 Rev1) on discrepancies between TRA messages from donor and receiver vessels and POR messages without the associate TRA messages from donor vessels.

4.12 In discussion, Contracting Parties agreed there seemed to be differences in how vessels were applying the regulations on transmitting TRA messages; for instance messages being sent for transhipments in port, out of port and outside of the Regulatory Area. It was noted that Article 12 of the Scheme requires TRA messages to be sent for transhipment taking place in the Regulatory Area. In general Parties thought it was useful to look at the details of the requirements, such as the scope of the TRA requirements.

4.13 **PECMAC agreed that text should be included in the Compliance Report related to the discrepancies. The scope of the regulations in particular Article 13 of the Scheme would be looked at by PECMAC in 2020.**
4.14 The Chair presented document PE 2019-02-12; the NEAFC Compliance Report for 2018, noting this was the revised draft report from PECMAC 1.

4.15 PECMAC considered the report, item by item, highlighting further amendments needed. The Chair noted options to split a table on catch reporting discrepancies; that further explanation on Recommendation 1:2018 was needed; as well as text on Article 16, paragraph 5 of the Scheme on means of inspection in the Regulatory Area.

4.16 Following various amendments PECMAC adopted the Compliance Report (PE 2019-02-12 Rev 2), subject to the following: the Russian Federation was invited to check figures in the Means of Inspection paragraph on page 8; Contracting Parties would double-check data in Table 3 B; an update to landings data from Norway on SHL sharks on page 17 and; a reference to Article 43 of the Scheme in the section on IUU listing.

4.17 Contracting Parties were requested to send all updates before 28 October 2019.

4.1.2.1 CNCP annual report responses

4.18 The Secretariat explained that updated CNCP compliance reports for 2018 (as requested) had been received from the Bahamas, Liberia and St Kitts and Nevis. (Documents PE 2019-02-10, PE 2019-02-11 and PE 2019-02-30)

4.19 In discussion, a Contracting Party expressed its disappointment that the CNCP responses to the PECMAC requests for clarifications had not been sufficiently clear.

4.1.3 Possible amendments to forms for

4.1.3.1 CP annual reports (articles 25, 32, 33 and 43)

4.20 The Chair introduced document PE 2019-02-18; the template for annual reporting on compliance, which reflected earlier PECMAC discussions and amendments. The Secretariat explained the detailed elements of the template.

4.21 In discussion, a series of detailed points and proposed amendments were raised on the template. This resulted in an amended document PE 2019-02-18 Rev2. The changes included: removing references to national legislation; simplifying references to PSC forms; including whether no action was taken or a warning was issued; referring to fines in local currency with an option to add comments and; clarifications to tables when referring to the jurisdiction of the Party taking the action or the Party reporting the infringement.

4.22 PECMAC adopted the Annual Report template as set out in document PE 2019-02-18 Rev 2

4.1.3.2 C-NCP annual reports (articles 34 and 35)
4.2 Non-Contracting Parties

4.2.1 NCP activities in the RA (article 43)

Nothing reported.

4.2.2 Cooperative NCP status and activities in the RA

4.23 The Chair explained that there had been no consensus on inviting the CNCPs to PECMAC 2 therefore none had been invited to attend.

The European Union set out its paper PE 2019-02-37 on the process related to possible identification by the EU of Liberia as an IUU third country. It explained that its aims were to encourage states to move towards meeting the requirements regarding flag State and port State requirements.

4.24 In discussion, some Contracting Parties noted that Article 34 had been amended in 2019 to require CNCP applicants to include details on measures in place to ensure compliance with flag State and port State obligations in accordance with relevant international instruments. While some CNCP applicants provided more information in this regard, others had not. It was proposed to base the decision on whether the applicants had provided such information, but no consensus was reached.

4.25 To ensure that the applications for CNCP status included more relevant information on compliance with flag State and port State obligations, it was proposed that PECMAC should clarify and further define what kind of information applicants should provide.

4.26 As it was agreed to set up a working group to prepare a first draft flag State Performance Review summary, c.f. paragraph 5.2 of this report, it was agreed that the working group should also prepare a draft in this regard.

4.27 Some Contracting Parties expressed the view that NEAFC could consider developing an ‘Observer’ status for those states that applied for CNCP status but did not want to carry out any fisheries activities in the Regulatory Area.

4.28 PECMAC agreed to raise the issue of potential status of Observer for CNCP applicants (as opposed to those CNCPs planning fishing activities) at the Annual Meeting for further guidance.

4.29 PECMAC discussed in detail the applications of the CNCPs below. In summary, the discussions concluded with the European Union, Iceland and Norway supporting the applications of Bahamas, Canada and New Zealand, while the Kingdom of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the Russian Federation indicated they would express their positions at the Annual Meeting. In the cases of Curacao, Liberia and Panama, the European Union, Iceland and Norway would not support the applications, while the Kingdom of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and the Russian Federation would express their position at the Annual Meeting. It was clarified that these reservations would not prevent the PECMAC Chair from informing the Annual Meeting about the positions regarding
the applications. The Secretariat was invited to informally update applicants on the process so far before the Annual Meeting.

4.2.2.1 Application for renewal - Bahamas

4.30 PECMAC discussed the application from Bahamas for renewing the status of a cooperating non-Contracting Party (Document PE 2019-02-04)

4.31 It was agreed to report to the NEAFC Commission that there was no consensus in PECMAC on any recommendation to the NEAFC Commission on the application of Bahamas for renewal of the cooperating non-Contracting Party status.

4.2.2.2 Application for renewal – Canada

4.32 PECMAC discussed the application by Canada for renewing the status of a cooperating non-Contracting Party (Document PE 2019-02-05)

4.33 It was agreed to report to the NEAFC Commission that there was no consensus in PECMAC on any recommendation to the NEAFC Commission on the application of Canada for renewal of the cooperating non-Contracting Party status.

4.2.2.3 Application by renewal – Curaçao

4.34 PECMAC discussed the application by Curaçao for renewing the status of a cooperating non-Contracting Party (Document PE 2019-02-06)

4.35 It was agreed to report to the NEAFC Commission that there was no consensus in PECMAC on any recommendation to the NEAFC Commission on the application of Curaçao for renewal of the cooperating non-Contracting Party status.

4.2.2.4 Application for renewal – Liberia

4.36 PECMAC discussed the application from Liberia for renewing the status of a cooperating non-Contracting Party (Document PE 2019-02-07)

4.37 It was agreed to report to the NEAFC Commission that there was no consensus in PECMAC on any recommendation to the NEAFC Commission on the application of Liberia for renewal of the cooperating non-Contracting Party status.

4.2.2.5 Application for renewal - New Zealand

4.38 PECMAC discussed the application by New Zealand for renewing the status of a cooperating non-Contracting Party (Document PE 2019-02-08)

4.39 It was agreed to report to the NEAFC Commission that there was no consensus in PECMAC on any recommendation to the NEAFC Commission on the application of New Zealand for renewal of the cooperating non-Contracting Party status.
4.2.2 Application by renewal – Panama

PECMAC discussed the application by Panama for renewing the status of a cooperating non-Contracting Party (Document PE 2019-02-03)

4.40 It was agreed to report to the NEAFC Commission that there was no consensus in PECMAC on any recommendation to the NEAFC Commission on the application of Panama for renewal of the cooperating non-Contracting Party status.

4.2.3 Review and possible amendments of the requirements for CNCP Status applications.

4.41 The Chair introduced PE 2019-02-26, which was a proposed questionnaire to make sure the CNCP applicants understood the more technical requirements of being a CNCP and ensure they were able to meet these (for instance authorisation of vessels and sending of VMS positions and messages). This would help the CNCPs in their preparations and reduce the considerable work load at the Secretariat in providing informal support to help the CNCPs understand the requirements.

4.42 In discussion, while some Parties reminded PECMAC that it was an obligation of the CNCPs to understand the requirements of the Scheme and to comply with them and thus questioned the limits of informal support, it was acknowledged that it was useful for the CNCPs to better understand the technical requirements. It was also noted that it would be interesting to see an assessment of actual performance on these technical issues by CNCPs.

4.43 PECMAC agreed that the questionnaire should continue to be developed on the basis that it should assist CNCPs to assess their readiness against the technical requirements. The Secretariat was requested to finalise the questionnaire without further input from PECMAC at this stage, but to report back to PECMAC on the use of the questionnaire and related performance by CNCPs.

4.3 IUU activities in the Regulatory Area (RA)

4.3.1 Review of IUU List A and possible amendment of IUU List B

4.43 No paper was presented under this item as no changes or new notifications regarding IUU vessels had occurred. No discussion on, or amendments to, the IUU lists were made under this item.

4.44 Under this item, the Secretariat introduced a paper PE 2019-02-27 with information from the North Pacific Fisheries Commission publicising its IUU vessel list.

4.45 It was noted by a Party that OECD in its assessment of RFMOs underlined the usefulness of shared IUU vessel lists, and that the subject would be discussed later in the agenda.

4.4 Possible amendments of the Scheme
4.4.1 Proposed amendments

Gear Codes
4.46 The Secretariat introduced a proposal from JAGDM to amend the NEAFC Scheme Annex IX C1) format for gear codes (document PE 2019-02-19). The suggested changes had resulted from discussions at NAFO STACTIC and subsequently JAGDM. It was pointed out that NAFO was dropping its request to JAGDM, so there was no need for the changes proposed.

4.47 In discussion, the view was generally that the changes did not add value and the issue may return in any case to JAGDM/STACTIC.

4.48 PECMAC agreed that there was no need to endorse the proposed changes in document PE 2019-02-19.

The Master’s signature on inspection reports
4.49 The European Union introduced document PE 2019-02-20 which proposed arrangements for an alternative to the Master’s signature for inspection reports under Annexes XIII and XVI of the Scheme. This would be followed in due course with other provisions for electronic signatures.

4.50 In discussion the Contracting Parties discussed the respective roles of Masters, Master’s representatives and agents. New drafting was offered to resolve any lack of clarity.

4.51 PECMAC agreed to adopt an amendment to Annexes XIII and XIV of the NEAFC Scheme as set out in document PE 2019-02-20 Rev 2.

Shared IUU vessel lists
4.52 The European Union introduced document PE 2019-02-28 as a follow on from the discussion on shared IUU lists under item 4.3. The amendments proposed to Article 44 of the scheme would lead to an automatic inclusion of vessels listed as IUU by named RFMOs into the NEAFC IUU list. The proposal included a provision for PECMAC to override such inclusion.

4.53 In discussion, Contracting Parties generally welcomed the inclusion of IUU listed vessels. However, some caution was expressed on uncontrolled entry of vessels from other lists if it was not entirely clear on the basis of their listing elsewhere. The proposal was revised in order to meet such concerns. One Contracting Party highlighted that if the Secretariat was requested to update the NEAFC IUU list only after having received notifications from the relevant RFMOs, this could lead to outdated NEAFC IUU lists, in situations where the Secretariat did not receive notifications. Hence, it was proposed to amend Article 44 to instruct the Secretary to add the NCP vessels from the IUU lists of the RFMOs after the annual meetings of those RFMOs. However, the final form of a Rev 2 of the document directed the Secretariat to add IUU vessels notified by other RFMOs immediately to the NEAFC A list, allowing for review of the A and B list in due course by PECMAC. Removal of the vessels could also be triggered by a request from the source RFMO.
4.54 **PECMAC agreed to adopt an amendment to Article 44 of the Scheme as set out in document PE 2019-02-28 Rev 2.** [Note; a similar paper on IUU listing (PE 2019-02-24) was withdrawn by Norway in light of agreement on the document PE 2019-02-28]

4.55 **Abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG)**

4.56 Norway introduced document PE 2019-02-25 on abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), proposing to extend the current provisions of Scheme Article 7 from fixed gear to all gear. Norway noted that NAFO had provisions on all gear.

4.57 In discussion, several parties indicated they needed to further consider the proposal. One Party queried whether the issue would in fact be regulated by the IMO.

4.58 **PECMAC did not come to any agreement regarding the proposal as set out in document PE 2019-02-25**

**JAGDM: Internal registration format**

4.59 The Chair introduced PE 2019-02-32; a proposal from JAGDM to amend internal registration number format in the NEAFC Scheme Annex IX C1. This would be a JAGDM proposal to the Commission.

4.60 **PECMAS agreed to the proposal being put forward by JAGDM to the AM, as set out in as set out in document PE 2019-02-32**

5. **Annual Meeting issues referred to PECMAC**

5.1 **AHWG ERS Implementation Group**

5.1.1 **Reports from the AHWG ERS Implementation Group Meetings in 2019**

5.1 The Chair briefly introduced the scope and terms of reference for the Ad Hoc Working Group on Electronic Reporting Systems. He set out the progress made at the 6 meetings of the Working Group, including reports in documents PE 2019-02-09, and PE 2019-02-29 (the report of meeting 6 of the ERS-IMP was currently being circulated in draft). He explained that Version 1 of the ERS implementation document had been completed, but there was continuing work on ERS Version 2. Some Contracting Party noted that they would implement FLUX ERS.

5.2 The Chair requested PECMAC to endorse Version 1 of the implementation document and the mandate of the ERS Implementation group to work towards a Version 2. Version 1 was set out in document PE 2019-02-36 Rev 1.

5.3 The Chair then explained that the second task of the ERS Implementation working group was to establish criteria for implementation, which had been endorsed at PECMAC 1 2019. This work also included a list of tests to be carried out by Parties before ‘go live’ dates, including that for when the EU started NEAFC ERS implantation. Another element was a fall-back
procedure for masters in case of failure of communications (see documents PE 2019-02-14 and PE 2019-02-15) referred to PECMAC.

5.4 Additionally, a level playing field on content in ERS system was proposed in documents PE 2019-02-35 and PE 2019-02-35A, however no agreement had been reached on this yet. These issues had been referred to PECMAC for advice, including on current assessments of costs and delay that the level playing field proposal may entail. The Chair asked PECMAC if in light of discussions at ERS-IMP it considered whether the requirement for a level playing field as in Recommendation 19:2019 should be removed, or if not, how it could be interpreted. One Party expressed the view that PECMAC had no mandate or capacity to open a discussion on the principles agreed in Rec 19:2019.

ERS Implementation document: Version 1

5.5 Contracting Parties noted that ERS implementation document Version 1 had been agreed by ERS-IMP and endorsed already during PECMAC 1. A list of issues to be identified by the ERS Implementation Group should be addressed in a Version 2. Some Parties indicated they would not start implementation until Version 2 was ready.

5.6 PECMAC agreed to adopt Version 1 of the FLUX ERS Implementation Document as set out in PE 2019-02-36 Rev 1 [note some minor changes are needed with regard to the table 38]

5.7 PECMAC then discussed the concept of a level playing field. One Party emphasised that this was an essential element in the transition period, agreed at the 2018 Annual Meeting, to ensure that the fact that one Party was using a different system did not create a bias for inspections. Another Party considered that the concept introduced a lot more work than they had first expected and this needed to be better explored.

5.8 PECMAC discussed in more detail document PE 2019-02-35 on circulation of information to inspectors, in particular 3 separate elements that ERS-IMP had sought further guidance on:
   1. Filtering of the data
   2. Timing of messages
   3. Aggregation of the data.

5.9 One Party queried if not the main extra elements of information were gear and number of catch operations. The European Union explained in detail the proposals in document PE 2019-02-35 and PE 2019-02-35A. These included the original proposal and then an amended proposal to meet the queries of other Contracting Parties on aggregation and potential time delays from a single reporting time. The latest proposal was that CAT messages should be sent once a day at the latest at 23:59 UTC and may be corrected before 12:00 UTC of the following day.

5.10 Other Contracting Parties expressed doubts on whether the change from the current system of a 12:00 latest reporting time would lead to loss of ‘live data’ and risk assessment flags for inspectors. The Chair explained that at the ERS-IMP meeting the discussion had focused on potential delays to inspectors receiving the relevant information.
5.11 The discussion then turned to differing views on how level playing field was to be achieved. The potential elements set out by the Chair were:

- Simple filtering of data to harmonise what is on both FLUX and NAF reports
- Aggregating different reports into one data point (e.g. haul by haul into daily reports).
- Timing element – when inspectors have access to a report.

5.12 One Party expressed comfort with the data filtering element alone. It was noted by another Party that a 2-year implementation period leading to potential inspection bias would be an important issue to avoid. A key part of the discussion was on the role of ERS-IMP, and potentially for the Annual Meeting, to consider these issues given the mix of policy and technical issues being raised.

5.13 PECMAC agreed therefore that ERS-IMP should look again at the elements of the level playing field. ERS-IMP should accordingly try to identify and agree the key issues, solve them where possible, and otherwise set out the options and their consequences, both legal and technical. The Commission would then be invited to consider the options and consequences raised.

5.14 At the end of the meeting, Contracting Parties informally updated each other on progress in implementing ERS systems at the national or bilateral level.

5.1.2 Fallback Procedures for Masters of Fishing Vessels

5.15 The Chair introduced PE 2019-02-14 (previously considered at PECMAC 1 2019) on fallback procedures in case of problems in communication between the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat. The European Union also introduced its proposal on the same issue (PE 2019-02-15 Rev 1).

5.16 In discussion, Contracting Parties highlighted different perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of the Master and the FMC when data was missing or wrong. While there was common ground on the need for fall-back arrangements and the potential to merge the two documents presented, there was not sufficient agreement to progress further.

5.17 The Chair noted that the issues would need to be resolved, but there was likely to be sufficient time for Contracting Parties to find common ground on the issue given ERS testing would be carrying on during 2020. One Party regretted that the issue could not be concluded due to the lack of time.

5.18 PECMAC invited Contracting Parties to continue with efforts to agree a common approach by the time of the meeting of the Commission in November. The European Union suggested that the PECMAC meetings, in particular in the second half of the year, may need 3 days in order to give sufficient time to resolve issues before the subsequent Annual Meeting.

5.1.3 Possible amendments to the Scheme

5.1.3.1 Annexes and appendices
5.1.3.2 ERS Implementation Document
5.1.3.3 VMS Implementation Document

5.19 The Chair noted that, so far, only Annex IX of the Scheme had been identified as a proposed amendment, including both VMS and ERS implementation documents. However, although the documents had been endorsed by PECMAC a pragmatic approach could be to send the ERS implementation document at a later stage.

5.20 PECMAC agreed to adopt (with a reservation from the Russian Federation on the ERS document) the proposed changes to Annex IX as set out in the ERS VMS and ERS (fishing activities) implementation documents as set out in PE 2019-02-36 Rev 1 (VMS) and PE 2019-01-24 (ERS) (from PECMAC 1 2019) to be sent to the Commission 2019 for consideration for adoption.

5.2 Flag State Performance Review

5.21 The Chair introduced the item reminding PECMAC of the previous discussions on Flag State Performance (self) review with a timeline toward reporting to the Commission in 2020.

5.22 Most Contracting Parties indicated their intentions to have their reports finished by the end of the year. The Chair explained that with two PECMAC meetings a year, a summary report by first PECMAC would enable a final report to be considered at PECMAC 2 before submission to the Annual Meeting in 2020.

5.23 It was suggested that a small working group could deliver a first draft to PECMAC 1.

5.24 PECMAC agreed to set up a working group to prepare a first draft Flag State Performance Review summary by PECMAC 1 with a final draft for PECMAC 2. The Vice Chair, Mindaugas Kisieliauskas (European Union) kindly agreed to Chair the working group.

6. Evaluation of the redfish fisheries special control measures

6.1 Irminger Sea

6.1 The Secretariat presented tables on compliance by Contracting Parties with special control measures regulating catches in the Redfish fisheries in the Irminger Sea (PE 2019-02-40)

PECMAC agreed to adopt the compliance tables as presented (PE 2019-02-40)

7. Possible amendments to Recommendations adopted by the Commission

Proposal for a ban on Shrimp fisheries collecting bags

7.1 Norway presented its proposal on amendment of the Recommendation on shrimp fisheries (Rec 11:2015) (document PE 2019-02-16). The amendment proposed was to ban the use of collecting bags on sorting grids in shrimp trawl nets. Norway set out preliminary results on bycatch caught in the collecting bags in two differing exploratory fisheries. Its view was that these results indicated the collecting bags undermined the aim of the recommendation to avoid capture of non-target species.
7.2 In discussion, other Contracting Parties requested more information on the details of the study, applicability more widely and indicated a reluctance to act on preliminary results. While some further information was provided at the meeting, Contracting Parties indicated that they preferred further consideration, starting with the scientific examination at PECMAS.

7.3 The discussion was closed with no action at PECMAC. Norway indicated it would forward the paper to PECMAS for consideration and to the Annual Meeting in due course.

7.1 ISMS Data Classification

No item

8 Advice from JAGDM

IMO and IRCS numbers in a public record of authorised vessels.

8.1 The Secretariat presented document PE 2019-02-38 with advice from JAGDM on IMO numbers with regards to making publicly available the NEAFC Authorised vessels list. JAGDM’s advice was in response to a request from PECMAC on the data, corrections, ISMS etc. JAGDM had noted quality issues with the data on authorisations leading to 14% of the IMO and XR data being wrong. To deal with this JAGDM was proposing some new checks in the NEAFC system on IMO and IRCS numbers, however budget and timing were also considerations. No concerns were expressed on any data elements unsuitable for publication. Contracting Parties would need to provide contact points, given Contracting Parties would be responsible as data originators and correctors. The ISMS would also need to be amended accordingly. If new checks were able to be built into the system, Contracting Parties were invited (but not required) to delay submission of data until December so it could benefit from the checking procedure. Otherwise quality checks would only be done on the next data input in late 2020.

8.2 In discussion, Contracting Parties thanked JAGDM for the advice. Clarifications were sought to be sure that Parties could still submit data earlier should they choose to do so.

8.3 PECMAC agreed the proposals from JAGDM (as set out in PE 2019-02-38) that the checking system should be implemented on IMO and XR elements. Other changes could be done at a later stage. All changes subject to budget and time constraints. PECMAC noted the changes needed to ISMS and the need for Contracting Parties to provide contact points for corrections. PECMAC also noted that Authorisations could benefit from a delay until December 2019 to benefit from automatic checking, but Parties could also submit in November if they were content that their IMO/XR data would not be checked.

9 International cooperation

9.1 The Secretariat briefly updated PECMAC on its international cooperation including at the Global Fisheries Enforcement Training Workshop, EFCA training, UNECE FLUX specialists meeting, a Workshop on strengthening MCS, the PSMA Technical Working group and finally at a meeting of the GFCM on enforcement.
9.2 Contracting Parties thanked the Secretariat for the attendance and input to relevant meetings.

10. Data security and confidentiality – ISMS
10.1 Identification of final documents.

10.1 PECMAC noted that all documents currently listed as restricted would be marked unrestricted at the Annual Meeting and subsequently published, unless identified by Contracting Parties to continue to be restricted. It was noted that national compliance reports and CNCP applications would not be published however.

11. Any other business

NEAFC reporting on implementation of the PSMA
11.1 Norway presented its proposal regarding a NEAFC response on reporting on implementation of the FAO Port States Measures Agreement (document PE 2019-02-23). This followed an agreement at the meeting of the Parties to the PSMA, which agreed to request State Parties to respond to a questionnaire in a period from beginning of June to end of August 2020. The meeting of the Parties to the PSMA had also agreed that, since RFMOs play an important role in the implementation of the PSMA, they should also be invited to report on their implementation. However, no questionnaire had been developed for RFMOs. Norway was of the view that PECMAC should be involved in the process of preparing a response from NEAFC to FAO.

11.2 In discussion, Contracting Parties agreed that a NEAFC response would be appropriate, with some discussion on the best way of bringing together such a response in a light touch way.

11.3 PECMAC agreed that the Secretariat should prepare a first draft of the NEAFC response to the PSMA issues as set out in PE 2019-02-23 by end January 2020. Then, by a correspondence process, PECMAC members would finalise a draft for consideration by PECMAC 1 2020. Contracting Parties would in particular be responsible for the sections on challenges in aligning to the PSMA. The final version would be circulated to Heads of Delegation in the normal way by the Secretariat before submission to FAO.

11.4 The Chair introduced document in PE 2019-02-31 on the review of Recommendation 19:2014 on compliance with the Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem closures. The paper set out issues on compliance to be considered by PECMAS in due course in its consideration of the effectiveness of the Recommendation in protection of VMEs from bottom fisheries. The Secretariat had carried out some mapping and investigation of false positives on fishing activity in or around the closed areas and made some suggestions on improved monitoring. PECMAC was invited to discuss its views on the effectiveness of compliance; on any improvements to the routine monitoring/analysis by the Secretariat; and any conclusions to forward to PECMAS to assist in their analysis of the effectiveness of Recommendation 19:2014.

11.5 In discussion, the Contracting Parties discussed the process they followed to investigate the false positive warnings, including their internal warning processes. Although the vast
majority of warnings had been false, two apparent infringements had been included in the NEAFC compliance reports but both cases were dismissed by national authorities with no further action taken. While the Secretariat had generated some useful visualisations, Contracting Parties did not consider this a major addition to their existing investigation processes. The key improvement could be a reduction in the number of false positives by adding or fine-tuning relevant criteria (fishing gear, catch data, speed) to issue a warning.

11.6 PECMAC nevertheless welcomed any progress the Secretariat could make, working with the NEAFC VMS service provider, on reducing the number of false positives, noting this would in any case be achieved by the ERS, in particular on ‘live’ reporting of gear. The Secretariat was requested to report back on this to PECMAC 1 2020.

11.7 PECMAC agreed that the Secretariat should support PECMAS in any further analysis apart from the compliance issues that Contracting Parties followed up, for instance analysis of spatial fishing patterns with regard to the closed areas over the last five years.

Observers at PECMAC

11.8 Norway asked for PECMAC views on potential participation of NGO observers to the PECMAC meeting, noting that UNFSA encouraged increased transparency and that permitting observer participation in PECMAC could prevent suspiciousness and negative attention. Norway noted that PECMAS allowed observer participation, and that other RFMOs, such as ICCAT and CCAMLR, also allowed this.

11.9 In discussion, Contracting Parties recalled that PECMAS would be reporting to the Annual Meeting on its experience of NGO observers. While some Parties were open to greater transparency they also noted the need to balance transparency with an effective process and discussions based on sensitive data (such as personal data or information on ongoing legal proceedings).

11.10 No conclusion was reached but the discussions were noted by PECMAC.

12. Report to the 2019 Annual Meeting

12.1 The draft report of the meeting was circulated to Contracting Parties for comments and the final report was adopted on xx October 2019.

13. Closure of the meeting

13.1 The Chair thanked participants for their work and the progress made in the meeting. He added his thanks to Björgólfur Ingason (Iceland) who was moving to a new post for his many years of contribution to PECMAC. He also thanked the Secretariat for their help with the meeting.
PECMAC
17 & 18 September 2019

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