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THIRD MEETING OF THE GLOBAL RECORD INFORMAL OPEN-ENDED TECHNICAL AND ADVISORY WORKING GROUP (GRWG)

Rome, Italy 26-28 June 2017

IHS Maritime and Trade revised offer

IHS Maritime and Trade (IHSM&T) is the company managing the issuance of the IMO number on behalf of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). In December 2013, the IMO amended Resolution A.600(15) on the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme to include fishing vessels 100 gross tonnage and above through Resolution A.1078(28). There are currently around 23 000 fishing vessels with an IMO number assigned, most of them of 100 GT or above (Global Record phase 1), meaning almost half of phase 1 vessels already have an IMO Number.

In July 2014 the Thirty-first Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) endorsed the use of the IMO number as the Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI) for the Global Record phase 1 (vessels of 100 GT and above) (Para 40.c of the COFI 31 report¹). The UVI, as the key component of the Global Record, ensures unique identification of each vessel, throughout time, and changes of flag, name, ownership, etc., thus playing a crucial role also in linking different pieces of information related to the vessel, its activities and even fish products throughout the market chain. Consequently, this piece of information, together with flag State, name of vessel, LOA and GT or GRT are the essential data fields for inclusion of any vessel record into the Global Record.

Both COFI and the GRWG indicated that the responsibility for the data and its submission to the Global Record relies on States, which could decide to make this information available to the Global Record through the respective Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). The GRWG explored the possibility of using third party data (from IHSM&T) to i) speed up the process of implementing phase 1, ii) cross-check information, iii) link to external/additional sources of information such as IHSM&T Sea-Web database, Equasis² and Interpol Purple Notes.

This process started at the first meeting of the Global Record Working Group (February 2015) which requested clarifications from IHSM&T on the management of the IMO Number (Appendices 6 and 7 of GRWG1 meeting report³) and cost implications for the Global Record. GRWG 2 (March 2016) enquired on the extension of IMO numbers as UVIs for phases 2 and 3 of the Global Record and discussed on several options put forward by IHSM&T (para. 42 and sections 2 and 3 of the conclusions on page 18 of the

¹ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4634e.pdf>

² The equivalent to the Global Record in the Maritime world, built to fight substandard shipping matters related to safety, pollution and security.

³ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5025e.pdf>

GRWG 2 meeting report⁴) for the use of data provided by the company to support and speed up the initial phases of development. GRWG 2 agreed to request guidance from COFI 32 on this matter (para. 98.3 of GRWG 2 meeting report). However, COFI 32⁵ did not conclude on this matter (making it now essential and urgent to take a decision in this regard, since the first working version of the Global Record Information System was launched in April 2017).

In the meantime, an increasing number of countries and RFMOs have taken steps to make the IMO numbers mandatory for fishing vessels of certain length ranges.

Following on the COFI 32 outcome, IHSM&T reconsidered its commitment to the Global Record Programme for the greater 'public good' in relation to the fight against IUU fishing through increased transparency and traceability.

In this line, IHSM&T has put forward (Annex 1) a revised offer for the use/inclusion of IHSM&T data (the 5 essential data fields) into the Global Record for free. This offer addresses the three options mentioned above:

1. essential data fields to be inserted in the Global Record whilst relevant flag State data is not available (to speed up phase 1 and allow linkage among different modules);
2. essential data fields to be used for verification purposes (check against flag State data for data quality) ;
3. essential data fields to be used to create hyperlinks to external/additional sources of information.

Actions requested by the Working Group:

The GRWG is requested to consider the revised offer and advice accordingly on the use of IHSM&T data and its role into the Global Record Information System development and implementation.

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5793e.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mr484e.pdf>



Draft revised offer from IHS Maritime & Trade for the inclusion of data into the Global Record

Suggested Methodology

- a. Where a fishing vessel record is not made available by a flag State, an IHSM&T record can be introduced into the Core (Vessel Details Module) of the Global Record. This IHSM&T record will be composed of the minimum 5/6⁶ essential fields already agreed by the Global Record Working Group, plus Length Between Perpendiculars (Lbp) and Registered Length (L). These records include all fishing vessels that have been allocated an IMO number, of 100 GT and above, and should be shown as sourced from IHSM&T. This service will be offered free of charge. The frequency of update could be weekly or as needed. FAO would enter into an agreement with IHSM&T for an initial period of 2 years, with the possibility of extension.
- b. In return for this, IHSM&T requires a seamless hyperlink from the Global Record (GR) to a commercial version of IHSM&T's entire Fishing vessel & Ownership database (FV Sea-web). While the GR will be free of charge to users, this hyperlink will be available only to users of the GR that would prefer to have an additional subscription to IHSM&T's FV Sea-web. This is purely optional.
- c. The Subscription levels to FV Sea-web have not yet been decided, but two levels of commercial subscription are being considered:
 - i. Full unlimited access
 - ii. A cheaper subscription with an upper limit per month on the number of vessel enquiries
 - iii. Possibly special reduced prize for the least developed States.The product will be modularised, so users will be able to access separate modules for current and historic vessel & owner details, and vessel movements.
- d. IHSM&T is currently planning that this version of Sea-web should not contain refrigerated transport vessels and support vessels, as it is not possible to identify these as a separate fleet. Details of these vessels could be accessed through a parallel hyperlink into Equasis; or from the existing/original Sea-web (covering all vessel types) if users already have a subscription to this product.
- e. The data provided by IHSM&T could also be used to increase data quality by checking flag State data (5 essential data fields) against IHSM&T data through the Global Record upload validation procedure.

⁶ IMO No., Flag State, Vessel Name, Length Overall (LOA), Gross Tonnage (GT) / Gross Registered Tonnage (GRT).

- f. Otherwise, IHSM&T can also offer to validate free of charge the IMO numbers on all incoming flag State records through a procedure to be defined. (It is well known that there are a lot of erroneous IMO numbers in circulation).
- g. IHSM&T recommends/suggests that all records supplied for the GR by flag States and IHSM&T records should be compared; and where there are data discrepancies in the minimum 5 essential fields for the same IMO Number, that the records should be returned to the sources for further research.
- h. With the agreement of flag States, IHSM&T would suggest that while discrepancies in the 5 essential fields between flag State records are being researched under g., the GR should indicate that they are under research.
- i. IHSM&T previously agreed under a separate commercial agreement to try to identify discrepancies in the full range of data fields supplied by flag States with the same IHSM&T fields (which will be available to users through the commercial hyperlink). This comparison is more difficult to do electronically than for the 5 essential fields. IHSM&T will continue to offer this service under a separate commercial agreement.
- j. IHSM&T data will be supplied subject to the Terms & Conditions, previously agreed with FAO, which will also need to be on display within the GR.⁷

IHSM&T believes that this revised offer would have the following benefits:

- (i) **Allow IHSM&T data to top-up the Core (Vessel Details Module) of the GR with the 5 essential data fields on a no fee basis.**
- (ii) **Improved Scope of the GR** The start-up size of phase 1 of the GR will be larger, up to a maximum of 26,000 fishing vessel records \geq 100 GT. This will attract more users to the GR; and enable additional information modules to be added to the GR by port, coastal and flag States.
- (iii) **Improved Transparency of the GR** At previous meetings of the GRWG, experts have argued that vessel record discrepancies in the Core of the GR supplied by States (e.g. caused by multi-flagging) and between flag State and IHSM&T records, could be highlighted (“flagged”) in the functionality of the GR, while the discrepancies are being researched by the sources. This will enable users of the GR to make inquiries with the sources.
- (iv) **Provide Users of the GR with a full range of data** For those records in the Core of the GR supplied by IHSM&T, the hyperlink into FV Seaweb will provide users with a full range of data on those records.
In addition, at previous meetings of the GRWG, some Members have indicated that they may not be able legally to supply certain data to the GR, in particular on vessel ownership. The availability of the IHSM&T hyperlink will provide users an straightforward access to an alternative source of data, clearly marked as IHSM&T.

⁷ This continues to be standard practice in Equasis.

- (v) **Improved Accuracy of both flag State and IHSM&T data in the GR**
Agreement to pass back data discrepancies to all sources of data for further research, together with flagging a possible discrepancy within the GR to engage users, will over time improve the quality of data supplied to the GR. IHSM&T will also benefit from the data passed back, which will improve the accuracy of the IMO Numbering Scheme for fishing vessels.
- (vi) **Expanding States engagement in the GR** IHSM&T believes that this model for both transparency and data quality supported by States participation, combined with ongoing engagement with users of the GR, will attract further States to supply data to the GR, and possibly help fund the GR.

Finally we emphasize that the IHSM&T fishing vessel database is maintained independently of both governmental regulatory and commercial ownership frameworks of shipping. A key part of the maintenance of the IHSM&T database is for the management of the IMO Numbering Schemes on behalf of the IMO; and the database is the originating source of IMO Numbers, offered free of charge to vessel owners, in accordance with IMO Resolution A.1078(28)⁸.

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⁸ There is currently an amendment to this Resolution in progress at IMO, to extend the IMO Numbering Scheme to: fishing vessels of non-steel hull construction of 100 gross tonnage and above; and to all motorised inboard fishing vessels of less than 100 gross tonnage down to a size limit of 12 metres in length overall (LOA) that are authorized to operate outside waters under national jurisdiction. The first of these amendments is relevant to Phase 1 of the Global Record.