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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Twenty-eighth Session

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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE GLOBAL RECORD
OF FISHING VESSELS, REFRIGERATED TRANSPORT VESSELS
AND SUPPLY VESSELS**

SYNTHESIS PAPER - FEBRUARY 2009

Introduction

1. In February 2008, FAO hosted an Expert Consultation (EC-GR) in Rome on the Development of a Comprehensive Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels¹ which recommended the Global Record (GR) be pursued as matter of high priority and be implemented as soon as possible. The EC-GR recommended that (i) progress towards the development of the GR should be made without delay, (ii) that this Twenty-eighth Session of COFI should be well informed on areas beyond the scope and time available to the EC-GR, and (iii) recommended a series of interim activities as detailed below.

2. Accordingly, this synthesis paper builds on Document COFI/2009/6 and summarises the results of the interim activities together with the key outcomes of this work resulting in a proposed programme of work with costs for consideration by COFI.

Global Record Interim Activities

3. The interim activities were designed to further consider a number of technical, financial and information issues and raise awareness among potential GR stakeholders by:

- convening correspondence groups on unique vessel identifiers, MCS user needs, data provision, verification, control, entry and access and database architecture and related information technology issues,
- raising awareness including with other potential GR stakeholders,
- commissioning consultant studies on a possible GR conceptual model and governance options and an updated project plan and costs, and
- convening a workshop, hosted by FAO to consider any relevant developments, including the outcomes of work done within the framework of the correspondence groups.

4. Participation in the interim activities comprised 31 experts and other resource people including 16 from FAO Member States and 6 from RFMOs with the remaining participants from a broad range of interests including from International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Lloyds-Register Fairplay (LRF), NGOs and industry.

Interim Activities Outcomes

5. As recommended by the EC-GR an informal technical workshop was held in London on the 15-16th January 2009 to consider relevant developments since the EC-GR and bring together the outcomes of the work undertaken within the framework of the correspondence groups with the intention of providing more developed information and guidance to the Twenty-eighth Session of COFI as to the possible next steps in the development of the GR.

6. At a technical level, the workshop examined some key issues in greater detail but stressed significant issues are still to be resolved and important concepts to be agreed before any design work can commence. The workshop revealed strong support for the GR from MCS practitioners, although work needs to be done to more clearly assess MCS and other user needs so that a GR can be designed and built to clearly specified user requirements. Awareness raising activities included a survey to industry, NGOs and other potential GR stakeholders and also revealed support for the concept of GR but stressed the need for reliable, accurate and timely information. Workshop participants supported the EC-GR recommendation that the implementation of unique vessel identifiers (UVI) was a prerequisite for the GR and that it was possible to leverage existing UVI schemes including the IMO / LRF scheme for vessels over 100 Gross Tonnes and noted with interest the work currently being undertaken within some RFMOs in this regard.

¹ FAO. 2008 Report of the Expert Consultation on the Development of a Comprehensive Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Rome, 25-28 February 2008., *FAO Fisheries Report* No. 865, Rome, FAO. 59p. Ref: FIIT / R865

7. Conceptually, a web based solution was seen as providing the most appropriate mechanism for timely access to data with the potential for using automated data transfers rather than manual submission. Considerable additional work is required to establish appropriate access to data, developing data transfer protocols and collaborating with data providers. A consultant study² developed a possible conceptual structure for the GR but more definition is required, particularly around scope, user needs and data provision before the conceptual structure can be finalised. The study strongly supported the need for good project governance and best practice project management in the design, build and implementation of the GR including the establishment of a Stakeholder Advisory Group to provide advice and guidance to the project, which was supported by workshop participants.

8. To progress the GR it was recommended that a high level project plan be developed that follows international best practice for IT system design and implementation where clear processes allow for technical issues and concepts to be addressed by appropriate users and specialists. In keeping with best practice, workshop participants suggested a limited pilot project or proof of concept be developed to test the concept of a GR against a series of critical measures before moving to full design and implementation.

9. Like the EC-GR, workshop participants were concerned to ensure the needs of developing countries were addressed and that any project plan include adequate funding for consultation and capacity building, education and training, initially through regional and sub regional workshops.

Proposed Programme of Work

10. Workshop participants supported the suggestion of a phased approach to GR implementation. Based on the work completed to date a proposed programme of work could include:

- establishing GR user needs including the specific needs of developing countries,
- convening a Stakeholder Advisory Group,
- further defining technical requirements including data provision and protocols and addressing any potential legal issues,
- designing and implementing a limited GR pilot project,
- preparing a comprehensive GR Technical Report incorporating the outcomes of the above work, and
- if necessary convening a Technical Consultation where the GR Technical Report will be presented and critical issues discussed for the purpose of making recommendations to COFI 29 what, if any, future steps should be taken for the further development of the GR.

Timing and Costs

11. Subject to decisions by COFI and the provision of adequate funding, the revised costs to complete phase one activities as described above through to December 2010 including the cost of holding a Technical Consultation are estimated to be USD 680,000.

² Macfadyen, G., & Banks, R., 2009. The Development of a Global Record of Fishing Vessels: Conceptual Structure and Governance Arrangements. Report to FAO, 23pp.