



REPORT OF EXTERNAL MEETINGS ATTENDED BY SPRFMO STAFF

Staff member	Craig Ioveridge
Positions	Data Manager
Institutions visited	EU Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Units DG MARE B2 (RFMOs) and D4 (Fisheries Control and Inspection) North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) IHS Markit and International Maritime Organisation (IMO)
Date	29 January to 4 February 2019 (Post COMM7)
Location	DG MARE Premises, Brussels, Belgium NEAFC, HIS Markit and IMO Premises, London, United Kingdom

Purpose of Meetings

Due to the location of the 7th Commission meeting (being The Hague in The Netherlands) the SPRFMO Data Manager was encouraged to take the opportunity to visit the offices of nearby relevant fisheries international institutions to better understand their work, share information and learn from the experiences of others¹.

DG MARE

The first institution visited was the EU Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE). The idea behind this visit was to familiarise the Data Manager with other national administrations and was similar in nature to a previous visit conducted in Chile after the 2016 Annual meeting.

Luis Molledo (Head of the EU Delegation to SPRFMO) introduced three of his colleagues, Ignacio Granell, Bernard Blazkiewicz & Stamatios Varsamos, who work primarily with NAFO, NEAFC and SIOFA in DG MARE unit B2 (RFMOs) and the following day Craig met with Aronne Spezzani from DG MARE unit D4 (Fisheries Control and Inspection).

Free range discussions were held on a broad variety of topics including decision making, the relative maturity/history of each organisation and the effectiveness of IUU Listing. An interesting point of difference was how SC advice (as provided by ICES) often recommends a TAC range rather than a specific number (as is the case with SPRFMO).

One unexpected occurrence in this year was new dynamics associated with holding consecutive sessions vs previously parallel sessions. Consecutive sessions had obvious advantages due to increased participation, however it did lead to longer discussions which affected the output of the compliance committee.

As (and if) participation in SPRFMO grows, when and which sessions to hold in parallel will become an increasingly important consideration. Challenges associated with stocks with multiple party participation vs the relative ease of decision taking with regard to single party stocks was also discussed and understanding these types of dynamics can also greatly help with meeting and workshop planning.

¹ As the Commission Chairperson, Mr. Osvaldo Urrutia, was also available, it was agreed that he would participate both in the NEAFC and DG MARE meetings to better understand the goals and processes of these institutions and how these may be related to, or impact upon, SPRFMO deliberations.

Information, dissemination and communications were also discussed. The usefulness of the NAFO booklet was recognised and while SPRFMO could consider that route it was a very significant undertaking to consolidate everything into a single set of rules. However, there did seem to be a clear need for efficient organisation of historic documents and web information especially now that SPRFMO is entering its 7th year (and has 13 years of history). A dedicated searchable document library with keywords (including subject, year and meeting etc) so that all related documents dealing with a particular topic can be easily found and collated would certainly seem to be useful.

The NEAFC system for Port inspections and transshipment information was referenced by FAO when developing its PSMA web applications. As SPRFMO further develops this area the Secretariat certainly expects an increase in the number and frequency of such reports and a robust web application which allows members/vessels to independently complete any associated data requirements could certainly alleviate any associated Secretariat administrative tasks.

NEAFC

The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) is the Regional Fisheries Management Organisation for one of the most abundant fishing areas in the world. The area covered by the NEAFC Convention stretches from the southern tip of Greenland, east to the Barents Sea, and south to Portugal. NEAFC Contracting Parties are Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation. Craig was hosted by Darius Campbell (NEAFC Executive Secretary) and Rachel Lewsley (Information Technology and Web Production Officer)².

Much of the interface with members is through the NEAFC website member area. There are numerous roles managed by Secretariat rather than members themselves (which is similar to how the SPRFMO runs its member area currently). This is in contrast with other RFMOs like CCAMLR in which the members are enabled to manage their own log-in permissions.

Discussions were held on the use of electronic reporting and the processes NEAFC uses to protect individual and confidential data. Similar processes are already in use within the SPRFMO Secretariat for public data releases. However, considering that the SC has expressed a desire to utilize fine scale information SPRFMO may need to consider techniques like scrambling vessel keys (which NEAFC does when releasing data to ICES).

The importance of pre-meeting online registration and timely lists of credentials was emphasised. The production of reports is also different between the organisations and Craig relayed the recent positive experience SPRFMO had with IISD Reporting Services.

Stock assessments were discussed, and the benefits of regular targeted research highlighted, although robust estimation of bycatch and discarding still seemed reliant upon good quality fishery dependant data. The ICES process for VME assessment was mentioned as being widely accepted by the NEAFC members and it is likely worth ensuring the SPRFMO SC is familiar with this process.

SPRFMO and NEAFC do differ in maturity as NEAFC is out of its growth phase and mainly immersed in improving current systems and has catch proportions that continue to be stable across the members.

IMO and IHS Markit

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships. The Secretariat had cause to correspond with the IMO recently and this visit was also an opportunity to familiarise

² Dr James Ianelli (SC Chairperson) invited Craig to observe a NAFO Working Group on Cod (Div 3d) stock assessment and Management Strategy Evaluation which was being held concurrently at the NEAFC premises. This was a great opportunity to witness other RFMO Science processes in action.

the Data Manager with the work of this organisation and its role in supporting the development of the FAO Global Record of fishing vessels.

IHS Markit is the originating source for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Ship Number and is the sole authority with responsibility for assigning and validating these numbers. The numbers are issued from the global maritime databases maintained by IHS Markit and consist of a unique seven-digit number. IHS Markit manages this Scheme on behalf of the IMO.

IHS Markit

Stuart is a fishing vessel expert Stuart Emery (IMO & New Construction Department, Maritime and Trade) within IHS Markit. IHS Markit does all vessels (predominantly merchant fleet) and fishing vessels are actually a very small part of their overall work. They have several teams of people (at various locations) solely concerned with keeping their database as up to date as possible. Their database contains over 600 fields of information (including historic changes) for each vessel.

The term “beneficial owner” was discussed and its meaning with respect to merchant vessels. The term was much harder to determine for fishing vessels due to the degree of co-ownership and the complexity of company arrangements (eg. it can sometimes require a six-month investigation to determine the beneficial/most influential owner for a single fishing company/vessel).

IHS Markit relies on submissions from owners (or flags) but does supplement their information using AIS, vessel scrapping yards and public vessel registers. This does mean that in some cases (particularly IUU vessels) SPRFMO information was more up to date. In fact, after the meeting Craig did forward the final 2019 IUU List to IHS Markit so they could update their records regarding 2 of those vessels.

IHS Markit tending to use the term “False flag” to include flagless and other similar issues. False flag techniques are being used to subvert international sanctions and some small island States have been duped by fraudulent companies posing as international registries.

<https://fairplay.ihs.com/safety-regulation/article/4307621/fraudulent-ship-registries-fall-under-the-radar>

A recent incident of dual IMO numbers for single vessels was discussed and it was confirmed that in such cases the records are adjusted, and the original IMO number is the one that remains. Situations involving vessels being unable to acquire IMO numbers was also discussed. IHS Markit has very few compulsory fields, however it is very proactive in getting the best information possible. This can lead to incomplete registrations due to language barriers or some other reason leading to a cease in communications.

Stuart was able to verify that the vessel the Zhong Xiang (which had been discussed during CTC6) had indeed been scrapped.

IMO

Later that afternoon Craig met with Brice Martin-Castex (Head of Implementation of Instrument support) who is the IWO Liaison point with FAO. He has close connections with SPC.

Brice operates bearing in mind the Capetown agreement of 2008 (not yet in force). This agreement will have an important working group meeting in Spain during Oct 2019 where RFMO input would be highly useful and appreciated. Two regional IMO initiatives in our areas the Tokyo MoU and the Viña del Mar agreement (based in Argentina).

Brice introduced Craig to IMO’s Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) which is a very good global reference source to check vessel details. Post the meeting I registered SPRFMO for limited (Public) access to GISIS. This level already gives useful information such as previous names and Flags, vessel type, date of build, GT and details on current owner. Brice offered to facilitate full access should we consider it worthwhile.

Concluding Assessment

The meetings with the 2 DG MARE units (RFMO and Control/Inspection) NEAFC, HIS Markit and IMO provided valuable opportunities to learn and compare SPRFMOs current work programme with those being undertaken by similar organisations.

Face to face meetings such as these cement working relationships which can then be leveraged in future work opportunities and gives SPRFMO (and staff) the benefit of the experiences of others.

The extensive list of topics covered shows how valuable these meetings were and highlighted some best practice examples where other organisations are employing applications or processes that could be replicated in SPRFMO (particularly in online applications and document storage/access).

The SPRFMO Secretariat is grateful to DG MARE, NEAFC, HIS Markit and the IMO for agreeing to host Craig and allow him to benefit from the expertness of their staff and for the diverse and interesting discussions that resulted during those visits.