

Meeting minutes

SSN/VMS pilot project
Operational phase kick-off meeting

Rome 11 October 2011

Background

As a follow up to the 5th meeting of the SSN HLSG (Brussels 14 April 2011) five Member States (Italy, Spain, Malta, Poland and Norway) expressed their interest in participating in the next phase of the "SSN/VMS synergies" pilot project (operational phase). The kick off meeting of the new phase took place at the premises of the Italian Coast Guard in Rome.

Mr Lazaros Aichmalotidis (EMSA) and Captain Leopoldo Manna (ITCG) acted as co-chairmen of the meeting assisted by Edmunds Belinskis (EMSA). The meeting was attended by representatives of Italy, Malta, Poland and Norway. Spain informed that they could not attend though they have a strong interest in following closely the pilot project.

The agenda is attached at Annex 1. The list of participants is attached at Annex 2.

Meeting Objectives

The objective of the meeting was to inform the representatives of the participating states the current status of the project and to agree on the practical steps needed for the launching the operational phase.

Meeting Programme

1. Opening / Introduction

The meeting was opened by Dr Conte, deputy General Director of the Italian Directorate of Fisheries. He welcomed the participants and wished a fruitful meeting. He mentioned that the ITCG needs to correlate information of different sources and this pilot project will help MS to improve fisheries control and comply with the new Control Regulation and related implementation rules.

Admiral Pasetti, Head of Fisheries Department of ITCG expressed his pleasure for the meeting, underlining the usefulness of this project to enhance the control activity on fishing monitoring activities. He highlighted that the fight of illegal fishing (IUU) is necessary not only for the environment protection but also to support honest fishermen who are also suffering from the illegal activities.

On behalf of EMSA Mr Lazaros Aichmalotidis thanked the ITCG for its continuous support in hosting meetings at its premises. He mentioned that this pilot project brings together the maritime safety, security and environment with the fisheries sector. However this does not mean that the Agency is expanding the field of its competencies. The only interest in the VMS data is due to the information sharing policy adopted by the Commission and the forthcoming obligation of the fishing vessels to be fitted with class-A AIS.

2. Approval of the minutes and of the agenda

The meeting agenda was approved.

3. SSN/VMS synergies pilot project overview

Mr Belinskis presented an overview on the "SSN/VMS synergies" pilot project objectives, the operational concept, expected benefits and actions performed. The outcomes of the 5th SSN

HLSG meeting when the Commission invited MSs to express their interest in participating in the pilot project were recalled.

The benefits of the pilot project were discussed. EMSA clarified that the pilot project doesn't influence the VMS business. Fishing vessels will be monitored because they will be fitted with AIS by 2015. The pilot project offers to the FMCs the functionality of correlating VMS with AIS data. with no cost.

Italy stated that the main advantages for the FMCs would be the improvement of the monitoring capabilities (VMS and AIS data on the same screen), which reduces the need for sending polling commands to fishing vessels while operating inside the AIS covered area (avoiding thus the cost of polling). Norway highlighted the necessity of enhancing the monitoring activities in order to discourage illegal activities.

The participants **noted** the information provided.

4. Current status

Mr Belinskis presented the current status of the SSN central system as well as the technical provisions for exchanging VMS data through SSN. Participating FMCs presented their VMS systems. Norway presented their solution and their experience gained on the use of AIS information for the fishing monitoring purposes.

Mr Belinskis presented a live demonstration of the data exchange between the Italian FMC and the SSN central system. The participants noted the data converting mechanism from NAF format into pseudo-IEC format (and vice versa) which is considered as one of the pilot project benefits. The opening of VMS data to the SSN community for search and rescue purposes was discussed. Norway stated that it is important for the pilot project to highlight this issue. Poland stated that the Maritime Administration is very interested in such information as it would be useful for maritime safety and proposed exchanging the VMS data through the SSN proxy connection.

The participants **agreed** that opening the VMS information to the SSN community would be very useful, but is not legally supported and this issue shall be considered as one of the pilot project suggestions reflected in the final report. Therefore the VMS data will not be shared with the national SSN Authorities (with the exception of Italy where the ITCG has the responsibility of both sectors).

EMSA also presented two possible solutions on the information (SSN2VMS) exchange:

- SSN transmits AIS positions to both: the flag state and coastal state. Flag state FMC does not re-transmit these positions to the coastal state, or
- SSN transmits AIS data only to the flag state (retransmission of the data to the coastal state done by the flag state FMC)

The participants **agreed** to proceed with first solution (SSN will send data to both, the Flags state and the Coastal state).

Mr Belinskis presented the issue of the VMS data exchange methods (GET or POST). Italy proposed using the GET method as it is currently applied by all the participating FMCs. Changing to the POST method will require amendments of the FMC software. Italy confirmed that the POST method would be preferable especially for sharing a large amount of data (all the data can be sent in one package) and should be utilised in future.

The participants **agreed** to start exchanging the VMS/AIS data by using the GET method, but keeping in mind that a possible exchange of increased amount of data would requires the change to the POST method.

EMSA informed the participants that the pilot projects will support the exchange of both Class A and B AIS data. However, the Directive 2009/17 (Article 6a) requires fishing vessels to be fitted with the AIS Class-A equipment. The participants **noted** the information.

Mr Aichmalotidis said that the implementation of a single SSN/VMS monitoring tool at EU central level will guarantee uniformity in the correlation method and will contribute in the further development of common data processing and evaluation methods.

5. Work plan

Mr Belinskis presented the pilot project's working plan and milestones. EMSA stressed the importance of timely submission of the requested information by the end of October 2011.

The participants **agreed** on the working plan and the proposed deadlines.

6. Pilot project monitoring and assessment

Mr Belinskis presented the pilot project monitoring and assessment methodologies ("technical" and "Operational" indicators) and the structure of final report.

The participants **noted** the presented information and agreed on the EMSA proposals.

Conclusions / Follow-up Actions

The meeting was concluded by Mr Aichmalotidis, summarising the main conclusions of the meeting as follows:

- a. The participants agreed to start the operational phase of the pilot project;
- b. AIS message transmission from the SSN central system will be provided to both, the flag state and the coastal state FMC;
- c. The GET method for the VMS data exchange will be used by MSs, but this method has to change to POST when the amount of the exchanged data would increase. The SSN central system will support both methods;
- d. EMSA will support data exchange with both types of AIS transponders (Class A and B).
- e. MSs SSN authorities are interested to get access to the VMS information (mainly for SAR purposes). However, opening the VMS information to the SSN community is not legally supported up to now. This shall be considered as one of the pilot project findings and shall be reflected in the final report;
- f. Participating MSs will send to EMSA certain information (see Annexes 2 and 3 of the document "Work plan") by the end of October 2011;
- g. An intermediate meeting to discuss the pilot project status will be organised in January-February 2012 and the final meeting in May, 2012. The meeting place and dates will be agreed at a later stage.
- h. The meeting minutes and documents will be made available through the EMSA website.

Annex 1: Agenda

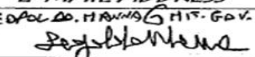
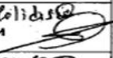
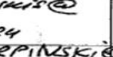
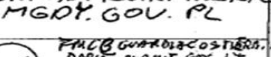
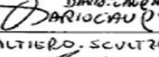
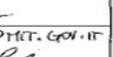

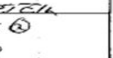

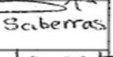
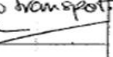
Annex 2: List of participants

Annex 1**Provisional Agenda****Kick off technical meeting****SSN/VMS synergies pilot project operational phase****Italian Coast Guard Headquarters (Viale dell'Arte n 16)****Rome, 11 October 2011 (09:30 – 17:30)**

I. Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Opening/Welcome to participants- Approval of the agenda	Italy/EMSA All
II. "SSN/VMS pilot project" overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Operational concept- Objectives- Expected benefits	EMSA
III. Current status <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Action performed and status of the Central system- Presentation of the SafeSeaNet Graphical Interface- FMCs' presentation of their national systems	EMSA Italy FMCs
IV. Work plan	EMSA
V. Pilot project monitoring & assessment	EMSA
VI. Discussion	All
VII. Decisions / Follow up actions	All

Annex 2
List of participants

Kick off technical meeting
SSN/VMS synergies pilot project operational phase
Rome, 11 October 2011

NAME	ORGANIZATION OF MEMBERSHIP	STATE	SIGNATURE and E-MAIL ADDRESS
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