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Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries
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Reports from experts

Briefing note on benefits of implementing UN/FLUX, and addressing frequently asked questions

Summary

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries has drafted this document on Frequently Asked Questions on the United Nations Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (UN/FLUX). Its purpose is to provide users with relevant information to support the implementation of this standard.

Document ToSSF/2019/INF.4 is submitted to the second session of the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries for discussion.

I.   Background

1.   The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries (ToS) has drafted this document on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the United Nations Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (UN/FLUX). Its purpose is to provide users with relevant information to support the implementation of this standard and to publish it on the webpage of the Team of Specialists[1].

II.   Frequently Asked Questions on UN/FLUX

FAQ 1.   What is UN/FLUX?

UN/FLUX is a global standard developed and maintained by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT). It is a messaging standard to exchange fishery catch information, with fishery information from vessels as its primary source of data. While entering fishery information in the message is required, the exact type of information is not. For example, the location in the message where information on vessels should be entered is standardised, while the exact vessel information, such as the code for a vessel, is not part of UN/FLUX and is not standardised. Therefore, there are no mandatory code lists associated with this standard.

FAQ 2.   What kind of objectives can be reached with UN/FLUX?

• Standardised messages with code lists;

• Reporting on fishery activities and monitoring and inspection of fishery activities;

• Stock assessments and fisheries quota;

• Exchanging of fishery information between governments, regional management organizations and other organizations;

• Supporting the exchange of fishery information between a vessel and fishery management organizations and countries.

Note: exchange of fishery information between vessel and authority is not part of UN/FLUX but can be supported by UN/FLUX.

FAQ 3.   What are the benefits of UN/FLUX?

The benefits of UN/FLUX, include amongst others:

• Effective, transparent and efficient data exchange;

• Timely acquisition of fishery data, allowing both prompt action on illegal fishery activities as well as informing decision making regarding sustainable fisheries (as timely acquisition of fishery data is a requirement).

• Practical solution and cost-effective;

• Assist in traceability of fishery value chains;

• Free, open and global standard;

• A common approach for electronic logbooks;

• Compatible with other UN/CEFACT standards

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[1] http://www.unece.org/tradewelcome/un-centre-for-trade-facilitation-and-e-business-uncefact/about-us/team-of-specialists-on-sustainable-fisheries.html

FAQ 4. **Between which parties is UN/FLUX used?**

UN7FLUX is mainly used for Government to Government (G2G) exchanges. However, it also makes it possible to exchange information from Business to Government (B2G).

FAQ 5. **What are the UN/FLUX domains?**

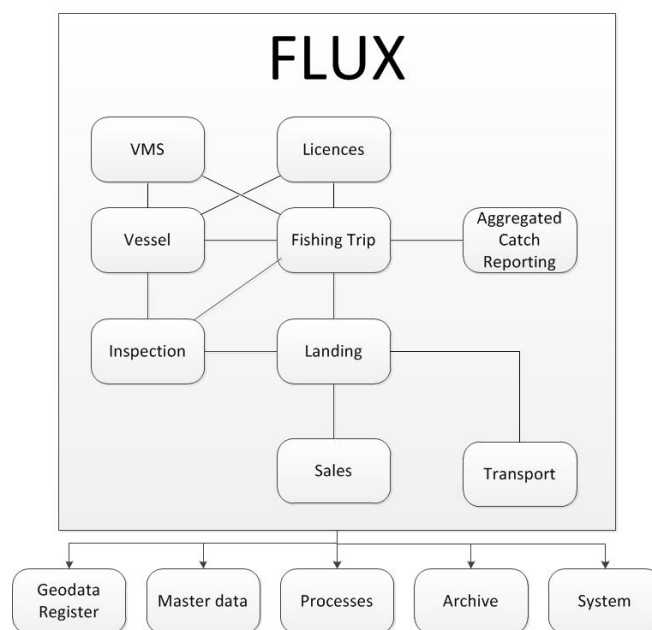The UN/FLUX standard has several domains defined, as follows:

Figure 1:UN/FLUX Domains

Standard implementations have been defined for the following data exchange domains:

i. Vessel Domain
This domain aims to standardise the exchange of fishing fleet data, and more specifically the information directly related to fishing vessels and vessels supporting fishing operations. This domain can utilise a direct link with the FAO Global Vessel Registry.

ii. Fishing Activities Domain
The fishing activities domain refers to data exchanges on fishing activities performed by vessels during a fishing voyage. They include data on all vessel activities, including departure and arrival into ports, entry and exit from fishing areas, and other movement related to a fishing trip. These data also include fishing effort, trans-shipments, relocations and landings.

iii. Vessel Positions Domain
The objective of this domain is to provide a standard for the communication of vessel position information (e.g. VMS or AIS) between monitoring centres.

iv. Fishing Licences, Authorisations and Permits Domain
The objective of this domain is to standardise the exchange of data between stakeholders in the context of requests for fishing licences, authorizations or permits.

v. Aggregated Catch Data Reporting Domain
The objective of this domain is to standardise exchanging aggregated catch data between stakeholders.

vi. Electronic Inspection Reports Domain
The objective of this proposed domain is to standardise the exchange of electronic inspection and sighting reports.

vii. Sales Domain
The objective of this proposed domain is to standardise the exchange of sales data.

FAQ 6. Do I need to implement all of UN/FLUX's domains?

No, it is not necessary to implement all domains to be able to use UN/FLUX. Depending on your information needs, you can choose which domains are useful for you.

FAQ 7. Is it costly to implement and maintain UN/FLUX?

The Total Cost of Ownership is likely to be less than that of proprietary systems.

FAQ 8. Can small island developing states implement and use UN/FLUX?

Most certainly yes! Although the first implementation can require investment, the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries (ToS) can assist and support you with the implementation of UN/FLUX. Furthermore, the ToS collaborates closely with the open source software community called FOCUS[2]. This community provides open source software for implementing UN/FLUX. The software is free to use and therefore can decrease significantly the cost involved in implementing UN/FLUX. Maintenance costs are low.

FAQ 9. To what extent is UN/FLUX implemented on a global scale?

The European Union Member States have adopted UN/FLUX and are in the implementation process. Thailand is conducting a technical feasibility study focusing on the domains of Licence, Vessel, Vessel Monitoring System and Fishing Activities. The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) has voted in favour of implementing UN/FLUX and will start the implementation process. Brazil has shown interest and started to investigate how UN/FLUX can be implemented.

Note: World map with UN/FLUX implementation to be made available on the ToS website

FAQ 10. What is the relationship between UN/FLUX, IUU and fishery subsidies?

UN/FLUX is a tool for sustainable fisheries management. It provides RFMOs or countries, with a standard enabling timely acquisition of the fisheries data needed for the decision-making process on sustainable fisheries management, and to discover vessels which are involved in IUU fishing activities.

FAQ 11. Where can I turn to for advice/support for the implementation of UN/FLUX?

The Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries was established for the worldwide promotion, advice and support on sustainable fisheries management standards, including UN/FLUX adoption and implementation. The ToS collaborates with FOCUS, an open source software community.

For more information, please visit: http://www.unece.org/uncefact/unflux

FAQ 12. Is it possible to integrate UN/FLUX with other UN/CEFACT standards?

Yes, UN/FLUX can be integrated with the UN/ Tracking and Tracing (T&T) and E-certification standards. By connecting to the UN/T&T, RFMOs and countries can close the

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[2] www.FOCUS.fish

circle and have all information, starting from the catch at sea, up to its consumers' plates, connected. This contributes to increasing the traceability of the fish and fish products.

FAQ 13. Where can I obtain more information on UN/FLUX?

All information on UN/FLUX and the ToS can be found on the website of the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries, including contact information if you would like to receive more information on their work and UN/FLUX. For more information, please visit: http://www.unece.org/uncefact/unflux

FAQ 14. Should I implement FLUX?

[Answer to the be drafted]

FAQ 15. What are the critical steps in implementing UN/FLUX?

[Answer to the be drafted]

FAQ 16. What are the prerequisites for using UN/FLUX

To use UN/FLUX, systems must be in place to gather the necessary information, such as logbooks, vessel registration, etc. [Answer to the be completed]

FAQ 17. Where can I find technical information on UN/FLUX? (e.g. XSDs, XML, other specifications)

On the website of the UNECE Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries and by contacting the Secretariat and the experts of the Team of Specialists at http://www.unece.org/uncefact/unflux

FAQ 18. Is UN/FLUX replacing systems and databases I am using now?

[Answer to the be drafted]