

Economic Commission for Europe

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Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Reports from experts

Proposal for the interaction between UN/FLUX and FOCUS

Summary

In line with its Programme of Work (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2018/22), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries engages in partnerships to share knowledge and expertise for sustainable fisheries management, which are primarily in Working Area 4, and also contribute to Working Area 2, which supports implementation of standards for sustainable fisheries. One partner is the FOCUS (Fisheries Open Source Community Software) community, which has developed a free, open-source software to implement parts of the UN/FLUX standard. This document discusses synergies with the work of the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries, and investigates an opportunity to bring FOCUS under the United Nations umbrella.

Document ToSSF/2019/INF.7 is submitted by the FOCUS Community Manager to the second session of the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries for discussion.

I. About FOCUS

1. The FOCUS (Fisheries Open Source Community Software) community was established in September 2016 with the purpose to create and maintain free software dedicated to the management and preservation of fishery resources.
2. As an open-source community, FOCUS is based on voluntary work from members and contributors. Sharing software, using the “Free or Open Source software” (F/OSS) model, is widely recognised as one of the most efficient ways of increasing the use of software, whilst at the same time ensuring the quality of the product by allowing other developers to check, improve or add functionalities. It also aims to save costs by not duplicating effort. The FOCUS community is led by a Community Manager and a Community Board, that together are responsible for the strategic direction of FOCUS. It is organised as a collaborative community built on respect, openness and voluntary contributions.
3. FOCUS is developing a free suite of tools to support fisheries management organisations. By offering their users a free platform to support fisheries management software and its users, it hopes to contribute to the sustainability of the fisheries resource. FOCUS believes that efficient fisheries management depends on sharing information. FOCUS therefore supports the UN/FLUX standard, in order to enable the sharing of information, and ultimately, knowledge, between different organizations.
4. FOCUS’ aim is to be the global reference for implementing standards, using innovative open source solutions, for sustainable fisheries management. In the long-term, FOCUS’ goal is to become a vivid, agile community of dedicated individuals with a “can-do role-up-the-sleeve mentality,” working collaboratively for a healthy and sustainable sea. It aims for a future where all parties have all the information and tools they need, based on the combined knowledge of the global community of fisheries management experts.
5. The fisheries management community would benefit from a forum where all parties can communicate. FOCUS want to utilize the UN/FLUX standard to create a global channel where all parties can share information and provide the software to do it. This software is obtained as a voluntary donation to the FOCUS community.
6. Currently promised application donations:
 - UnionVMS (to be donated by Sweden and EU): makes vessel positions visible on a map of choice;
 - FLUXfmc (to be donated by EU): application suite to visualise logbook-, vessel position- and sales messages;
 - FLUX Transport Layer (to be donated by EU): to provide a secure and easy-to-use transport mechanism for UN/FLUX messages;
 - Smartphone logbook app (to be donated by Estonia): logbook application for coastal fisheries for a smartphone². The purpose of this document is to update the ToS on SF on the current status of planned work activities described in Work Area 2 and Work Area 3.

II. Activities

7. The Team of Specialists (ToS) promotes, facilitates and supports the implementation of sustainable fisheries standards on a global scale, particularly the Fisheries Language for Universal Exchange (UN/FLUX). It aims to achieve an effective and efficient exchange of

information related to fishery activities and the subsequent supply chain, between all stakeholders.

III. Proposal

8. Since their beginnings, both FOCUS and the ToS have recognised that their work is closely linked. The goals and activities of FOCUS are supplementary to the goals and activities of the ToS, but FOCUS lacks a legal mode of organization. It is an informal network of experts, and this makes it hard to accept donations, find sponsors, and engage officially. FOCUS also needs an IT platform to manage the applications effectively and responsibly.

9. FOCUS believes that integration with the ToS would enhance both the operations of FOCUS and those of the ToS

10. FOCUS therefore proposes to investigate how FOCUS could be brought under the United Nations umbrella while keeping its own identity. FOCUS invites the meeting to agree to investigate this possibility.
