



Study on the feasibility of improved co-operation between bodies carrying out European Coast Guard functions

Executive Summary

June 2014



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- The *Study on the feasibility of improved co-operation between bodies carrying out European Coast Guard functions* identifies and evaluates the possibilities of enhancing coordination and cooperation of different coast guard functions across the EU. It responds to previous calls from the European Parliament and the European Commission to study the concept of enhancing cooperation and coordination among coast guard services in the EU. The study was undertaken for the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) of the European Commission by ICF International working with the support from REG4SHIPS. It took as its framework the list of ten coast guard functions as defined by the European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF)¹ and considered eight core activities involved in performing them. In this study, the term ‘collaboration’ is used as a shorthand term to describe various models or forms of cooperation and coordination that can take place at different governance levels. The focus of this study is exclusively on cross-border collaboration among coast guard authorities in different Member States.

There is already extensive collaboration among coast guard services

- The responsibility for carrying out coast functions is distributed across 316 public authorities in the maritime Member States of the European Union. Arrangements vary widely among the Member States, with a mix of civil and military authorities often involved.
- These authorities are undertaking joint activities with peer organisations in other countries through a total of 70 collaboration structures operating at the international, EU, and regional levels. In addition, there are 41 bilateral and multilateral cross-border cooperation agreements between EU Member States, some of which involve non-EU States.
- The breadth and depth of cooperation vary widely across the functions. The largest numbers of collaborations focused on maritime environmental protection and response, maritime safety and maritime surveillance. Structured EU wide/ regional/ multilateral cooperation as well as permanent operational coordination are amongst the most widely used collaboration models across the EU. Most of these collaborations involve data sharing. Several structured cooperation agreements also involve capacity building and joint operations. EU institutions support permanent operational coordination activities across a whole range of activities. Financial burden sharing procedures are mainly carried out by EU institutions in their respective functions.

Current structures create barriers to collaboration

- The benefits of collaboration among Member States are made less accessible to individual coast guard authorities when the costs of joint working are raised by differences in organisational and staffing structure, restricted budgets, systems, technologies, ways of working, and other barriers. The outcome is a ‘sub-optimal’ level of collaboration and overall lower efficiency and/or effectiveness of service delivery. Factors explaining this sub-optimal situation include administrative and legal obstacles to collaboration, political or organisational priorities and institutional complexity. External factors includes budgetary pressures and growth in demand for the services provided by coast guard authorities as driven by growth in maritime passenger traffic and maritime trade, pressures on the maritime environment and fish stocks and threats to internal security heightened by troubles in neighbouring third countries.
- Stakeholders’ consultations confirmed the above challenges and agreed on three key problems:
 - The lack of information on the remit, powers and capabilities of other authorities is a barrier to collaboration; this is mainly due to the complexity, diversity and fragmentation of institutional arrangements for delivery of coast guard services at national and supra-nation level and the multiple legal frameworks focusing on specific aspects of collaboration activities.
 - Human resources, financial constraints as well as the limited number of operational assets hamper collaboration with other authorities; and,

¹ The ten coast guard function are (1) Maritime safety; (2) Maritime Security; (3) Maritime customs activities; (4) Maritime law enforcement (5) Maritime border control; (6) Maritime surveillance; (7) Maritime environmental protection and response; (8) Search and rescue; (9) Accident and disaster response; (10) Fisheries control.

- There is room for improvement with regard to the permanent coordination and full interoperability of coast guard services; currently joint operations are limited to certain coast guard functions and are time-bound and the interoperability of systems, processes and assets can be further improved.

The case for enhancing collaboration

- Increasing collaboration may entail the national authorities making a financial contribution to a third party, surrendering some operational control or programming activities jointly with respective authorities. Member State authorities performing coast guard functions need to see genuine benefits in further investment in collaborative working and joint services provision for change to occur. The difficult financial environment in which many coast guard authorities find themselves at this time reinforces the need for collaboration proposals to be underpinned by a robust business case taking into account direct benefits, financial costs but also ultimate economic, social and environmental impacts.
- There is a case for action where collaboration increases overall service effectiveness and/or efficiency, enables cross sector activities and respects the subsidiarity and proportionality principles. The collaborative solution needs to fit the problem. Regional cooperation is particularly suited for addressing common challenges relating to threats, risks or needs in sea basins, shared borders. EU level action is particularly suited to activities aiming to safeguard a public good or an economic interest common to all EU Member States, and generally through the use of the Agency model.

There are viable opportunities to enhance collaboration

- The study identifies improvement opportunities relating to:
 - **Capacity building**, specifically:
 - Providing tools/supporting fora that facilitate networking between coast guards in different Member States; Developing a vision and strategy for EU coast guard collaboration developed by and for the Member States' coast guard authorities which complements the work of EU agencies such as FRONTEX and EMSA;
 - Improving collaboration on training issues;
 - Constructing and maintaining new pools of experts on topics relevant to coast guard functions.
 - **Joint operations and asset sharing**, specifically:
 - Promoting asset sharing for search and rescue operations;
 - Facilitating cooperation on cross-sector joint operations;
 - Supporting mutualisation of assets.
 - **Data sharing**, specifically:
 - Promote the further harmonisation of existing systems / frameworks for information sharing;
 - Promote common, procedures and tools
 - Collecting and disseminating activity and benchmarking data
 - **Research and innovation**,
 - Improving cooperation on R&D and innovation.

These are evaluated in detail and costed within the study report.

A roadmap of costed, prioritised actions is presented

Proposals on phasing of actions within the measures on the short, medium and long term are presented in the form of roadmap which suggests a phasing of specific actions over the short, medium and long term, with these being defined as follows:

- Short term – within a year (i.e. end of 2015)

- Medium term – within the next three years (i.e. end of 2017)
- Long term – within the next five years (i.e. end of 2019)

The implementation timetable takes January 2015 as a starting date to account for internal decision making, budget and programme planning of EU institutions, regional networks and or of the Member States' authorities. The phasing of the actions related to the improvement opportunities has been based on sequencing actions so as to make the most progress towards the objectives of the measures.

The programme can be scaled to the availability of resources. The analysis suggests that there are straightforward, low cost actions that would help to improve the conditions for collaboration among coast guard authorities and opportunities to move forward in a number of key areas with relatively modest investment.

The roadmap is summarised in Figure E.1 on the following page.

Figure E.1 Improvement roadmap

Focus	Improvement opportunities	Short term	Medium term	Long term		
Capacity building	Support inter-Member State networking (IO-10)	<i>Designate SPOC & set up corresponding national governance arrangements</i>	<i>Set up online collaboration platform with information on Member States' authorities</i>			
	Construct and maintain new pools of experts (IO-4)	<i>Incentivise national authorities to declare or volunteer available expertise across functions to the extended pools</i>	<i>Develop administrative tools for the maintenance of a register and management of the deployment of experts</i>	<i>Finance a scheme to ensure efficient exchange of personnel and experts for those function not currently benefiting from expert</i>	<i>Finance a scheme to ensure efficient exchange of personnel and experts for those function not currently benefiting from expert</i>	<i>Finance a scheme to ensure efficient exchange of personnel and experts for those function not currently benefiting from expert</i>
	Improve collaboration on training and build a network of training institutions (IO-5)	<i>Place online information about the coast guard training institutions in the EU</i>	<i>Develop European Qualification Frameworks for coast guard services</i>	<i>Co-financing of joint training sessions focusing on cross-border and cross-sector cooperation</i>	<i>Co-financing of joint training sessions focusing on cross-border and cross-sector cooperation</i>	<i>Co-financing of joint training sessions focusing on cross-border and cross-sector cooperation</i>
	Development of a strategy for EU coast guard authorities' collaboration (IO-14)	<i>Develop joint 'vision' statement for coast guard authorities from different countries to collaborate</i>				
Data sharing	Promote or build on existing common frameworks for information sharing (IO-12)	<i>Map x-border information flows and their legal basis</i>	<i>Common framework for data and information exchange for EU institutions</i>			
	Promote common standards, procedures and tools (IO-1)	<i>Set-up common risk management and analytical framework</i>	<i>Pilot IT analysis tools</i>	<i>Pilot IT analysis tools</i>	<i>(implement standards, framework and IT tools)</i>	<i>(implement standards, framework and IT tools)</i>
	Promote the collection of statistics and their dissemination (IO-13)	<i>Study assessing the information needs of the targeted stakeholders</i>	<i>Conduct survey and report results</i>	<i>(Conduct survey and report results)</i>	<i>(Conduct survey and report results)</i>	<i>(Conduct survey and report results)</i>
Joint operations	Promote asset sharing for search and rescue operations (IO-3&9)	<i>Set up EU-wide database on rescue plans</i>	<i>Set up common databases of SAR assets</i>		<i>Encourage the development of common SAR standards & systems</i>	<i>Facilitate the emergence of Regional SAR operational centres</i>
	Facilitate cooperation on cross sector joint operations (IO-8)	<i>Define operational procedures and governance models for undertaking cross-sector joint operations</i>	<i>Organise planning exercises or ways in which assets and personnel can be shared during cross-sector joint operations</i>	<i>Organise planning exercises or ways in which assets and personnel can be shared during cross-sector joint operations</i>	<i>Organise planning exercises or ways in which assets and personnel can be shared during cross-sector joint operations</i>	<i>Organise planning exercises or ways in which assets and personnel can be shared during cross-sector joint operations</i>
	Promote and support mutualisation of assets (IO-7)	<i>Investigate on models of good practice for the mutualisation of assets across all coast guard functions</i>	<i>Develop a common database of assets</i>	<i>Promote of the use of eligibility criteria in existing EU financial instruments conducive to the adoption of good practice</i>	<i>Promote of the use of eligibility criteria in existing EU financial instruments conducive to the adoption of good practice</i>	<i>Promote of the use of eligibility criteria in existing EU financial instruments conducive to the adoption of good practice</i>
R&D-innovation	IO 6: Improve cooperation on R&D & innovation	<i>Study on past or current research projects related to cooperation in coast guard services</i>	<i>Publish comprehensive programme of research</i>	<i>Promote previous research outputs to coast guard authorities</i>	<i>(Promote previous research outputs to coast guard authorities)</i>	<i>(Promote previous research outputs to coast guard authorities)</i>
Timetable		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total financial costs (in million EURO)	Strategic IO - 4, 5, 10 & 14	0.6	7.0	8.9	5.9	5.9
	Specific IO - 1, 3&9, 6, 7, 8, 12 & 13	7	4	2	3	5

