

AC/135 Main Group - Directors on Codification

The 97th meeting of AC/135 Main Group was hosted by the United Kingdom from May 25 to 27 in Edinburgh, Scotland. It was the most attended gathering of Directors on Codification with representatives coming from 41 countries. AC/135 was brought up-to-date by the guest speaker Mr Jim Engle, Chairman, NAFAG, on the latest NATO and CNAD issues including the growing focus on cadre groups to deliver support to operations and multi-national approaches.



The increasing importance of codification data quality drives AC/135 undertakings. The New Zealand-led review of current quality metrics aims to determine those that could provide “health indicators” about AC/135. NAMSA is progressing with the AC/135 Quality Plan that will document all AC/135 quality procedures and metrics.



The management of codes assigned to vendors and manufacturers (CAGE) residing in the non-NATO countries had generated additional work during upgrades of sponsored countries from Tier 1 to Tier 2. The Spanish proposal allowing certified sponsored countries to generate NCAGEs by themselves should simplify the process. Oman was interested in assigning CAGE codes for Omani entities and establishing a back office at their NCB.

The NATO Guidance on Unique Identification (UID) has been produced by AC/327 and Panel A would consider flagging in NMCRLplus, the NSNs that have UID markings.

Belgian Armed Forces have already flagged UID items in her national database.

Mr Stuart Kelly, UK MOD, discussed the growing link between Obsolescence and Codification Databases & Systems to highlight how the United Kingdom was expanding its codification tool and processes to cover wider logistics support issues. This led to consider obsolescence as another interesting set of data enhancing NMCRLplus and promoting NCS role as master data holder.

Australia and USA shared their experience with Performance Based Logistics (PBL) and Contractor Logistics Support (CLS) contracts where unique supply systems were provided by the contractors and NCBs would have to maintain their engagement to ensure cataloguing issues were addressed properly.

The Group of Directors on Codification adopted the codification training curriculum focusing on practical exercises regarding item name selection, creation of characteristics data and generation of requests for codification. The Jordanian delegation led by Brig. Gen. Mohammed AL HABHBA indicated that they had attended a codification training session organised by the UK NCB in parallel with the 97th Main Group meeting.



The Armed Forces of Jordan already use NCS to some degree and consider applying for AC/135 sponsorship.

Represented by the State Secretary Mr Dušan SPASOJEVIĆ, Serbia signed an agreement on Tier 1 sponsorship during the 97th meeting of AC/135.

The United Arab Emirates reactivated their Tier 1 sponsorship on 21 July 2010 and so became the 61st country in the world using the NATO Codification System. Pakistan and Brunei were authorised for sponsorship with their agreements to be signed. There are no signs that sponsorship into NCS would stop as more countries including Japan and Jordan are expressing interest. The Chairman in

cooperation with NAMSA and a number of Directors continues to support workshops and seminars to pass the message to users about how codification can assist in the supply chain and also to help build understanding and capability in new countries.

India shared their experience since joining NCS and recommended that an expert team be established to help candidate nations formulate requirements for a new codification system, especially on their way towards Tier 2 status.

Panel A – technical experts on codification

Panel A provides a forum for discussion of technical issues, publications and procedures regarding NATO codification. This group defines in detail all codification procedures to ensure that this well-oiled mechanism, as NCS is, responds to demands from logistics. Above all, Panel A determines in detail the procedures regarding quality checks of codification data prior to publication on NMCRL and monitors compliance with timeframes for completion of foreign codification requests, updates AC/135 codification publications and conducts practical testing of nations' codification tools for compliance with the manual on Codification ACodP-1.

Australian NCB was codifying spare parts for a major programme, the Airbus A330-200 Multi Role Tanker Transport aircraft as a country of first purchase. That list of spare parts was consisting of 5000 items produced by 445 manufacturers located in 16 countries. The Australians have reached an agreement on the process i.e. direct codification with the Project Office (EADS-CASA) in Madrid, with the assistance of the Spanish NCB. Australia had been able to identify many advantages in codifying without submitting traditional requests for codification (LSA): no need to send technical data (this is available from the manufacturer, based on the Codification Contract Clause), the requesting NCB simply provides the Initial Provisioning List (IPL) to the processing NCBs for NSN assignment. Another advantage was the flexibility for the codifying NCB in terms of timeframes that could be negotiated as long as codification was delivered prior to the delivery of the items. The major point was mutual confidence among project participants and constant communication. This Australia's initiative concerning direct codification of export contracts showed significant improvements to be made in the whole codification process performed on the Airbus 330-200 MRTT.



Panel A attendees enjoyed both the hard working sessions and the annual bowling competition. The latter takes place at each spring meeting of Panel A and this time Scotland took the Championship Cup from Australia.



Supplier- Sourced Codification

The final report on the United Kingdom-led project to explore the usage of supplier-sourced information prepared directly for the codification process, was delivered. The approach adopted was for information to be provided directly by the items supplier and to expect industry to use any of their local systems as a source for the required data. ISO 22745, in combination with supplier modules of catalogue software, supports the description in an appropriate format to assist with the NCB codification process. The main focus would now shift towards promoting the project findings to a wide industry and MoD audience as well as to activating a user group which could deliver an implementation plan for Supplier-Sourced Codification.

NMCRL

The NATO Master Catalogue of References for Logistics (NMCRLplus) had expanded its range of data available by linking them to the Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) codes and integrating item drawings from the Federal Item Identification Guides. The search by characteristics data with support of a step-by-step wizard had been integrated and NAMSA was in the process of developing a DVD-ROM for NMCRLplus in cooperation with the Pilot Nations. Besides, NAMSA elaborated on the possibility to introduce web services for NMCRLplus allowing non-human intervention by implementing a Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA).

