



Codification – The Global Language of Logistics

15th Newsletter, February 2012

AC/135's New Mission and Vision

AC/135 has recently refined its mission statement in line with developments and emerging initiatives within NATO, and it now reads: *“To provide and promote the NATO Codification System as the primary means of materiel identification by Armed Forces, Government and Industry in support of interoperable and effective global logistics operations”*.

The vision of AC/135 is *“One World – One Codification System – One Global Standard”*.



AC/135's 100th Meeting

This anniversary meeting was held in NATO Headquarters in Brussels on 8th November 2011 and was attended by over 40 nations. NATO codification originally started with a group of six nations but now counts 64 nations from around the globe operating and managing the largest materiel database in the world. The codification community is currently dealing with a range of issues including Data Quality Standards, Data Exchange Technologies, Asset Tracking and Master Data Management, all of which bring new challenges for the NCS. As was highlighted by NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Defence Investment, Mr Patrick AUROY, who emphasized the importance of NATO Codification as a key enabler for NATO operations, AC/135 has not only successfully contributed to

NATO's efforts to enhance interoperability but it has also put into practice NATO's ambition to reach out to partners across the world. This ambition to work closely with NATO partners is reflected in NATO's new Strategic Concept.

The official signing ceremony of the Jordanian sponsorship agreement took place during the 100th meeting, at which Russia's membership as an NCS Tier 2 nation was formally recognized, Russia having now developed a full codification capability. NATO Codification, as a straightforward, non-contentious and very practical means of engaging with new nations, is emphatically multi-national in its approach. A key objective of AC/135 is to widen the 'Community of Codification Nations',



to enhance their capabilities and to contribute to NATO's goals regarding the development of international relationships and partnerships. In 2011, AC/135 signed sponsorship agreements with Brunei Darussalam, Japan and Jordan, bringing the number of nations in AC/135 and the NCS community to 64, i.e. exactly one-third of all the nations in the world. A sponsorship agreement with Pakistan has also been approved and is awaiting signature. The NCBs of Indonesia, Montenegro and some other nations plan to apply for Tier-2 membership at the beginning of 2012.

AC/135 conducted a codification workshop for the Royal Armed Forces of Morocco in Rabat on 18 October 2011. This workshop aimed to promote the use of the NCS within the Country and gathered representatives from all arms and services of the Moroccan Armed Forces, as well as representatives from the Moroccan MOD, Government agencies, National and International Armament industries around the theme "The NCS as an Enabler of Interoperability for the Armed Forces".



Codification Workshop in Rabat Oct 2011.

Smart Codification serving Smart Defence

AC/135 is pursuing its work regarding the compatibility of emerging civilian standards with military data requirements in the field of item identification. Phase four of the Supplier Sourced Codification (SSC) project was conducted with the aim of automating the exchange of source data in support of codification and of gathering evidence in support of the adoption of ISO 8000 by the Industry and Defence sectors by demonstrating the very significant improvements in data quality. For the first time, the UK was able to fully codify a platform - the TERRIER vehicle - in accordance with ISO 8000 Pt 110 & ISO 22745 and 72.5% of all items were codi-

fied with technical data of the highest quality. The final project report recommends that AC/135 move from an R&D approach to an implementation plan for both NCBs and industry partners. The provision of data in accordance with these ISO standards is an added value for any project with more than 1.000 transactions a year.

The New Zealand-led work on defining rules and procedures for a comprehensive quality system with a set of agreed criteria has moved on to the next phase of developing a complete quality system for the NCS. This work will bring new perspectives on the quality of data exchanges within the NCS by focusing on system performance, on the number of accurate and erroneous records, on the ability of NCBs to meet turnaround times and on the overall quality of the product. Each of these criteria may be represented using various visual cues, some of which should provide a warning when a performance indicator reaches a critical level.

“Codification Challenges and Opportunities”

was the theme for the 11th Codification World Forum held in the world heritage city of Bruges, Belgium this year. The forum, which was attended by some 170 defence and industry delegates from approximately 50 nations worldwide, expanded on the challenges ahead: coping with declining resources and sharing tasks, promoting the benefits of codification and engaging with industry and other organizations. Throughout this two-day event comprising plenary meetings and workshops,

there was a consensus on common concerns and goals as well as on shared aspirations with industry partners. New voices were heard on an inclusive NCS community of equal rights and responsibilities and on new approaches such as commercial codification. Dr. King of the LSC Group presented the codification benefits framework that is to provide a common, standard, international view of the advantages of codification. This work summarizes the responses and experience shared by some 65 senior members of the codification community, giving concrete examples of where codification has brought about savings. The forum briefings are accessible on the AC/135 website at www.nato.int/codification. Some discussions were curtailed due to lack of time, but can be continued via social networks



The UK NCB going to dinner.



like Facebook, where the NCS community has recently become active. This Quick Response code, which has become popular outside of the automotive industry due to its fast readability and large storage capacity, is now included in the NMCRL marketing material and other applications may be considered. Do you use QR codes in your activities, and if so, how? Let us know your opinion at AC 135 NCS Community Group Page on Facebook.

AC/135 has an ambitious programme of technological development and engagement as well as key objectives on data sharing, integration and quality to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in support of the Alliance's operations. **The NCS Transformation Steering Group** is updating NCS methods and processes with the aim of enhancing the efficiency and quality of the NATO Codification System. It is also looking at emerging standards and tools with a view to furthering interoperability with future systems in the area of NATO logistics and with industry. The NCS TSG has been concentrating on five major areas: Supplier Sourced Codification, the transformation of the US FLIS system (the foundation of the NCS), codification of services (a new initiative led by the Czech Republic), the introduction of XML into the NCS and the introduction of application data into the NCS. Each project's 24-month roadmap has been published on the AC/135 forum and is available on codification.proboards.com. The NCS TSG is a forum for interaction between NCBs, the NAMSA IT support team and codification IT tools vendors within the AC/135 community.

Forum Name	Topics	Posts	Last Post
General			
AC 135 Chat Room (2 sub-forums)	6	26	
FLIS Transformation (7 sub-forums)	1	7	
NMC CATALOGUE user groups	1	9	
NCOBE User Group	3	10	
Transformation Steering Group	8	62	
TRECOD Working Group	2	4	
General Board	6	29	
Codification Benefits Study	1	2	
Panel A	1	2	



The NATO Master Catalogue of References for Logistics (**NMCRL**) enables both logisticians and defence contractors to provide the armed forces with relevant technical information, thereby facilitating co-operative logistics activities in Alliance operations. Taking user feedback into account, NAMSA is constantly enhancing the NMCRL with new features. In order to demystify the NMCRL codification terminology, there will now be two methods for accessing and searching for codification data: a basic, more user-friendly mode for non-expert users with no codification background, and an advanced mode for experienced codifiers. In addition, the NSN detail screen will be enhanced and include packaging data. A new online subscription system will facilitate both the registration of new users via the NMCRL website and the integrity of user logins managed by NAMSA.