# PROPOSAL TO RESTRUCTURE THE EXPORTS & IMPORTS WITHIN PoCxxl

'Queen Victoria' leaving Southampton May 20th 2007

## INTRODUCTION

As you will be aware, there has been a lot of debate in the forums about how best to update PoCxxl and make it more realistic. You and I have recently exchanged several personal messages over my project to restructure the oil sector. One of my proposals was to introduce a two-letter coding for individual goods.

Since then I have been in more-or-less daily contact with Peter (Sparky) and together we have come up with a series of changes we would like to see implemented. If introduced we believe they will greatly enhance PoCxxl in every respect. These changes are detailed below and we believe it would be possible to incorporate most, if not all, in to the game. By doing so, we believe PoC will more accurately mirror the world-wide shipping industry and will be guaranteed to give more enjoyment to players.

Both Peter and I realise that this would mean a great deal of work for you. However, we will both assist you where we can. I would also like to put the main proposals on to the forum, not only to encourage improvements to them, but also to enlist assistance from others. But first we need to know whether these proposals will work! And, of course, that you are willing to incorporate them.

## OVERVIEW OF PROPOSALS

What started out as a request from me to Peter about the port of Baton Rouge in the U.S. has grown into a fully-blown overhaul of everything to do with the export and import side of PoCxxl. We have both spent considerable time and effort to come up with the following proposals which, broadly speaking, may be placed under the following headings.

1. The limitations of the present game.
2. Geographical Areas
3. Quantities of Exports and Imports
4. Exports/Imports – the 'new' Harbor.xml file
5. Goods.
6. Ships.
7. How we might help.

## 1. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT GAME

Ports of Call is a cult classic. From its' humble beginnings with the Ports of Call Classic to the latest 3D Sim version it has a faithful band of enthusiasts. However, it is the PoCxxl version that provides the 'guts' of all later versions and has the largest following of all. A dedicated band of talented people have spent much of their own time making the game more interesting for others by providing many add-on goods, ports and ships to add to the variety. However, time has moved on since it was first introduced and there is a growing feeling in the forums that the xxl game is out of date and could be improved upon in many ways.

Although a player has control over which ship he buys, subject to certain limitations, there is, with a few exceptions, no limit as to what goods he can ship. For example, a container ship can load a shipment of coal or chrome ore and a dedicated crude oil tanker can load any oil product the player selects.

Having selected his preferred cargo the ship-owner sets sail to the destination port. However, in real life, the port might not import the cargo in question, or the quantity he is shipping might be too large or small to be realistic, or the ship the player is using might be too large to use the port facilities.

A player has no real control over where he sails his ships in order to make his fortune. When he visits the 'Charter' screen, he is presented with an array of goods to ship to ports all over the world. Some are more lucrative than others. Many items are, as already stated, available for shipping to ports which would not normally receive them. Agricultural products to an oil-port for example and, as one player recently commented in the forums, the most cost-effective journeys tend to be over long-distances and one keeps on ending up in Australia with a cargo, the size of which, would keep the locals supplied for many years! Finally, the control a player has over imports is non-existent. We appreciate that you are looking in to improving the import side of the game but would you please look at our suggestions before going ahead. We are looking to change all of the above!

We all love this game otherwise we would not be so interested in its future development! We all want to see Ports of Call XXL truly become…

**PORTS OF CALL**

***XXL***

***The ultimate Cargoship Simulation***

## 2. GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS

At present, the only references made to geographical areas that we are aware of are to be found in the harbor.xml. These name the port, the country and give the map co-ordinates of the port itself. In order for our proposals to work we would like to add a fourth tag in the harbor.xml, a single letter, which would detail the PoCxxl ***Area*** in which the port may be found. These areas are listed below. If this project goes ahead, a list will be prepared of all countries in PoC, together with their respective Area Codes.

| | |
|---|---|
| A | WESTERN EUROPE – All European countries whose ports lie on the Atlantic coast, the North Sea, the Baltic Sea and including Spanish and French Atlantic coast ports, Gibraltar, Madeira and Gran Canarias. (Arctic & White Sea ports when opened). |
| B | SOUTHERN EUROPE – All European ports in the Mediterranean Sea including Spanish and French ports, all Adriatic and Aegean ports, Turkish Mediterranean ports, Malta and Cyprus. |
| C | BLACK SEA – All Black Sea ports including Turkey. |
| D | NORTH AFRICA – All African ports on the Mediterranean coast including Israel and Moroccan ports east of the Straits of Gibraltar. |
| E | WEST AFRICA – All African ports on the Atlantic coast from Morocco in the north to Cape Town, South Africa in the south. |
| F | EAST AFRICA – All African ports on the Indian Ocean from Port Elizabeth in the south, north to Somalia, Madagascar. |
| G | MIDDLE EAST – All ports on the Red Sea and Persian Gulf but also including Yemen, Sudan and those Egyptian ports in the Red Sea. |
| H | WEST ASIA – Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). |
| J | EAST ASIA – All ports from Myanmar south east to Papua New Guinea, including Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines. Also including Russian ports in the Pacific and Bering Sea. |
| K | JAPAN and KOREA (North and South). |
| L | CHINA |
| M | OCEANIA – Australia, New Zealand and all associated island groups. |
| N | WESTERN SOUTH AMERICA – All South American ports on the Pacific seaboard including the Strait of Magellan and Tierra del Fuego, north to Colombia. |
| P | EASTERN SOUTH AMERICA – All South American Ports on the Atlantic Seaboard, north to Venezuela and the Caribbean Sea ports of Colombia. |
| R | WESTERN CENTRAL AMERICA – All Central American ports on the Pacific seaboard from Panama north to Mexico. |
| S | EASTERN CENTRAL AMERICA – All Central American ports on the Caribbean seaboard from Panama north to Mexico including Mexican ports in the Gulf of Mexico. |
| T | THE CARIBBEAN – All Caribbean & West Indian states, including Bermuda and the Turks and Caicos Islands and the Antilles. |
| V | WESTERN NORTH AMERICA – Aleutian Islands, Alaska, western Canada, south to California, Hawaii. |
| W | EASTERN NORTH AMERICA – Great Lakes ports, Greenland, eastern Canada and eastern U.S. states south to Florida. |
| X | U.S. GULF – states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. |

## 3. QUANTITIES OF EXPORTS & IMPORTS

The amounts of goods on offer at a port are currently controlled (according to threads in the PoC Forum) by the <anzfracht> tag in the harbour.xml. Apparently the <einwohner> and <einkommenstreur> tags in the same xml also have some bearing on how much of a particular cargo is offered by a port and the <teutyp> tag in the goods.xml too has an affect on the number of cargos of a particular goods being offered. We also assume that the 'economic climate' is hard-wired in to the game and that this too will reflect on the cargo amount.

We would like to dispense with these features (other than the economic climate) and put much more emphasis on the actual tonnages moved by a port over a specified period in order to increase realism. We would like to introduce a single number between 1 and 0 to represent the actual tonnage. With most ports now owning their own websites on the 'net, it is now far easier to access information about exports and imports of individual ports. The numbers and the tonnages they represent are outlined below. It is based on a total tonnage of an item per annum:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1 to 250,000 tpa |
| 2 | 250,000 to 500,000 tpa |
| 3 | 500,000 to 1,000,000 tpa |
| 4 | 1,000,000 to 5,000,000 tpa |
| 5 | 5,000,000 to 10,000,000 tpa |
| 6 | 10,000,000 to 50,000,000 tpa |
| 7 | 50,000,000 to 100,000,000 tpa |
| 8 | 100,000,000 to 150,000,000 tpa |
| 9 | 150,000,000 ++ |
| | |
| 0 | A default figure of 500,000 tpa where the export/import amount is not known. |

## 4. EXPORTS/IMPORTS – THE 'NEW' HARBOR.XML FILE

Only exports may be controlled to an extent by a port-compiler in the present game. A goods that a port exports may be entered in the <fracht> tag and the amount that the port offers for export is controlled by the features described in Section 3 above. The numbers immediately after the name of the goods seem to affect the price a ship owner would be paid for shipping it, the higher the number, the more money they will make.

In this section we will describe our proposal as to how we might more accurately control the exports and imports of a port using the sets of letters and numbers mentioned in the two sections above. We believe that PoC should be able to cope with this.

### Exports

We would like to replace the <fracht> tag whilst retaining the basic names of the goods a port exports. For the sake of argument we could call this new tag <frachtexport>. We would dispense with the numbers currently shown immediately after a goods item and replace them with letters and numbers from the two tables in the preceding sections to show to which Areas a goods is being exported to and how much (in tons) is being exported there per annum.

Example 1.

Port Hedland in Australia is currently the biggest export port of iron ore in the world. A large part of this currently goes to China but they also export to Japan, South Korea and the United States amongst others. For the sake of this argument let us say that the port exports 182,000,000 tons of iron ore to China each year, 55,000,000 tons to South Korea and 400,000 tons to the USA West Coast. Therefore, using our codes it would look like this:

| Region | | Area | Quantity |
|---|---|---|---|
| South Korea | = | K | 7 |
| China | = | L | 9 |
| USA (W) | = | V | 2 |

the new <frachtexport> tag in the Port Hedland harbor.xml would read:

<frachtexport>Iron Ore,K7L9V2</frachtexport>

Example 2.

The Ju'Aymah offshore crude terminal off Saudi Arabia currently exports nearly 200,000,000 tons of crude oil, mainly to the USA (80%)* but also to Western (15%)* and Southern Europe (5%)* amongst others. Therefore, using our codes it would look like;

| Region | | Area | Quantity |
|---|---|---|---|
| W.Europe | = | A | 6 (30,000,000 tpa) |
| S.Europe | = | B | 5 (10,000,000 tpa) |
| US Gulf | = | X | 9 (160,000,000 tpa) |

The new <frachtexport> tag for the teminal would read:

<frachtexport>Crude Oil,A6B5X9</frachtexport>

* Denotes fictitious values used to demonstrate this argument

We appreciate that this is not 'ideal' but by using these codes at least we will be able to get the goods moving from a port they are exported from to the areas they are exported to. It can be refined a little though by use of the import side.

I have intentionally shied away from placing a comma (,) between the Area Code and the tonnage number. This is because the comma seems to signify a break to the computer. Each Area Code used to describe an area to which a goods is to be exported should be 'tied' to each tonnage number that immediately follows it. However, if a comma can be inserted after each letter/number combination all the better.

## Imports

There are no controls on imports in the current game and as long as the <hafentyp> tag in the harbor.xml has some letters in it, the port concerned will receive goods. However, in reality it does not even require to have any letters in it for goods to be generated by the computer. We appreciate that a solution to this problem is being worked upon at the present time but we ask that you consider the following.

Our proposal for imports is to use a new tag in the harbor.xml. For sake of argument we will call it the <frachtimport> tag. It should be compiled exactly as the <frachtexport> tag, with use made of the same letters and codes we introduced for the export tag. Although we appreciate that it is not the final word it will, as with the <frachtexport> tag above, help to ensure that goods arriving in an area they were exported to will arrive at only those ports in the area where that goods is imported and in roughly the quantities they are imported at.

If by careful scrutiny of websites we can discover exactly how much of a certain commodity a port imports and where it imports it from, provided no other port in the receiving area receives the same goods from the same exporting area, the tonnage received by the port will be more-or-less 100% accurate. However, life is never that easy!

CMA CGM Pelleas in Southampton Water, May 24th 2009.

Example 1.

As shown in the Export paragraph above, Port Hedland exports 182,000,000 tons of iron ore to China each year and some 55,000,000 tons to South Korea. Let us say that only two Chinese ports import iron ore from Australia and they are; Shanghai which imports 112,000,000 tons per annum and Dalian which imports the remaining 72,000,000 tons. Again, for the sake of this exercise, Ulsan is the only South Korean port to import Australian iron ore. Their respective <frachtimport> lines for iron ore would be:

| | |
|---|---|
| Shanghai | <frachtimport>Iron Ore,M8</frachtimport> |
| Dalian | <frachtimport>Iron Ore,M7</frachtimport> and |
| Ulsan | <frachtimport>Iron Ore,M7</frachtimport> |

For the second example I will throw a number of items together for a port and demonstrate what a longer, more complete <frachtimport> line would look like.

Example 2.

Tanjung Pelepas is a busy port in Malaysia. It is mainly an export port and only imports six different goods as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Cement | 1,200,000 tons p,a, from Vitoria in South America. |
| China Clay | 650,000 tons p.a. from Cornwall in England |
| Agric. Products | 17,000,000 tons p.a. from New Zealand and 7,000,000 tons from Chile. |
| Electronics | 890,000 tons pa from South Korea, 2,300,000 tons from Japan, 370,000 tons from San Diego in the USA, 50,000 tons from Germany and 1,000,000 tons from Surabaya in Indonesia. |
| LPG | 680,000 tons pa from Saudi Arabia |
| Wine | 3,900,000 tons from Italy. Unknown quantities from California and Australia. |

Note: Goods and figures used in both examples above are fictitious.

The <frachtimport> line would look like this:

<frachtimport>Cement,P4,ChinaClay,A1,Agric.Products,M6N5,Electronics,K4V2A1J4,Liquefied Petroleum Gases,G3,Wine,B4V0M0</frachtimport>

Notice that there are only four entries against Electronics. This is because both South Korea and Japan shares the same Area Code and therefore count as one.

## 5. GOODS

Peter (Sparky) has spent considerable time and put a lot of effort in to collating a list of all known Goods in the game, both default and add-on. In addition, he has grouped together all goods that are transported by individual types of ship and given them a code made up of either a single or two letters. Furthermore, he has classified all of the different types of ship that are required to be used for each cargo. This invaluable aid is documented on an Excel file and may be downloaded from his site by clicking on the link below:

http://sparky43.de/poc-goods-keys.zip

The problem of certain types of ship transporting unsuitable cargos will be discussed more fully in the next section. There are, however, several new cargos we would like to introduce.

### Diesel Oils

During my investigations into the workings of the oil refining business I found time and again reference to many refineries producing light fuel oils or diesel. In order to plug the gap between gasoline and the heavy fuel oils, MDO and MGO, I will introduce ‘Diesel Oils’ in to my tanker project. Diesel Oils will represent Diesel, obviously, and Domestic Heating Oil and the like.

## Offshore Crude

As it is my intention to introduce Floating Production and Storage Offshore ships, 'FPSO's', to my tanker project, it will be necessary to split the crude oil offered as cargos by these facilities from the standard crude oil. This will enable full use to be made of the Shuttle Tankers that were produced for me by 'Stickymonk' (there is also one default ship). I acknowledge that whilst some FPSO's will permit conventional tankers to load whilst berthed alongside, most require the services of a specialist Shuttle Tanker, which loads bow-to-bow with the FPSO, the crude oil being pumped aboard the tanker using special equipment housed in the bow of he tanker. The goods item itself will be an exact copy of the Crude Oil goods, simply renamed 'Offshore Crude'.

## Containers

If anything is guaranteed to annoy even the most ardent enthusiast of xxl it is the ability for a ship owner to load nearly anything in to a container and transport it around the world. Peter has come up with a brilliant, yet simple, solution which will ensure this part of the game becomes history. It revolves around one question!

You look at the tens of thousands of boxes neatly stacked up in rows and aisles in container terminals. You admire how the huge container ships distribute the weight of these boxes throughout the length and breadth of the ship but, oh yes! I almost forgot the question!

What is in them?

Answer: No one really knows!

Rather than listing all cargos that might be shipped in containers and then making up individual goods.xml files for them all, why not simply have around half a dozen categories for containers. These could be:

**Containers Bulk** – transporting any bagged bulk products – maize, wheat, cereals, sugar, grain, rice, potatoes, Agric. Products, etc.

**Containers Consumables** – electrical goods, household appliances, plastics, motor spares, flat-pack furniture, toys, clothing, plastic ducks – you name it, the list is nearly endless.

**Containers Dangerous Goods** – as it states, dangerous goods or products in any shape or form.

**Containers Empty** – as stated – the existing goods.xml renamed.

**Containers Reefer** – anything chilled or frozen.

**Containers Tanks** – the tanks one can see being transported, bolted to an external ISO frame. These can carry any liquids or powders ranging from beer and wine to chemicals but are not classified as Dangerous Goods.

Each of these types could be given a different weight classification. Finally,

**Containers** – a 'Wildcard' with the potential to cause problems because no one knows what it contains. It might be perfectly innocent and the shipper has put a lot of money up front simply to get the box to it's destination as quickly as possible. Or it might contain something which arouses the interest of the Customs officials at the port of arrival. You might then be released without

charge or fined! One thing you can be assured of, however, is that your ship will be impounded whilst the Excise men make their investigations! Could this be tied to the smuggling side of the game?

## 6. SHIPS

### Unsuitable Ports

The passage of ships around the world is governed by the three maps contained in the images folder within PoCxxl. Map3mask shows the world with both the Panama and Suez Canals open, Map4mask has the Panama Canal closed whereas both canals are closed in Map5mask. Therefore, all three are very 'general' in their restrictions. Peter has 'opened up' certain areas for shipping, principally the Kiel Canal and the Cook Strait, separating the North and South Islands of New Zealand. He has also recently opened up the Mississippi River for me as far as Baton Rouge LA.

The sight of a fully laden Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) sailing majestically up the Amazon River to Manaus must be truly awe-inspiring but this, and the fact that the tanker then discharges its entire 325,000 tons of MDO at that city, no doubt until the streets are awash with the stuff, is totally erroneous. It just doesn't happen!

Worldwide, there are comparatively few ports with the ability to handle a ship the size of a VLCC. That is why many of the crude oil loading terminals are sited offshore, making use of deeper water and loading by means of Single Buoy Moorings (SBM's). There are certainly more ports throughout the world that can handle ships up to the size of 'Suezmax' (the Map4mask map). But there are a good many ports, within the add-on files especially, that are unable to even handle these. I, personally, would like to see all ports truly reflect the maximum size of ships they can handle and the maps to be adjusted to force this. Certainly, it will make life a lot more difficult for the ship owner, but it will be more true to life and surely, that is what this business is all about – having the right ships for the job in hand. It might be less profitable running 'Panamax' ships as opposed to VLCC's or large bulkers on certain routes, but so be it!

The task of blocking ports on the maps is, however, one that can be done by the players themselves. What would be very helpful though, when a player visits the Charter Screen, should they select a cargo for a port that is too small for the ship they are loading, a message warning them of this pops up on the screen or, better still, that particular cargo doesn't appear as being available to them at all!

### Unsuitable Cargos

Ore Carriers are able to transport Agric. Products, General Cargo Ships can ship refrigerated produce. Just two examples of what can be done in the existing game. In his Goods file, Peter has listed some 23 'types' of ship. He has also grouped together, by means of code, all goods each type of ship can transport in real life.

We would like the Charter Screen to show only those cargos a ship of a certain type is permitted to carry e.g.

Reefers - The Charter Screen only shows refrigerated cargos.
Ore Carriers – only shows ore cargos.
Crude Oil Tankers – only shows crude oil cargos
Product Tanker – only shows petrochemicals and chemicals.
..and so on.

To make this project work all goods have to be categorized in to special 'groups' of products which will then be 'bound' to a particular type, or types of vessel. Each group will be identified by a letter or letters. Standalone goods, those which may not be grouped with any other product, will be given their own identifier. In order to do this the goods.xml files will have to be expanded with a <type> tag. Here is an example:

<warenname>Bananas</warenname>
<type>R</type>

Peter has already placed all known goods in to groups and allocated them identifying letters and these may be seen in his file.

In order that a goods may be bound to a particular type of ship, the ship's tag <kategorie_typ> must show a term out of a list of predetermined ship's types. These are shown in the tangle below. The tag <sub_typ> (or any new tag) must show all of the goods identifier letters for the types of cargos that particular type of ship can carry. Here is an example of what we mean:

<kategorie_typ>Reefer</kategorie_typ>
<sub_typ>R,Rc</sub_typ>

This example shows that Reefers will not only be permitted to carry goods in Group R (e.g. Bananas) but will also be permitted to transport goods in Group Rc, which includes fish and vegetables. The last line is important for special ships not fitting into the default scheme (e.g. livestock carrier with container racks).

A tangle showing all of the Predetermined Ship Types, together with the Groups of goods they can carry is shown on the next page.

## HOW WE CAN HELP

We appreciate that we are asking you to do a lot for us and that, as well as PoCxxl, you have three other versions of the game to oversee. However, we do believe that all of the changes we have asked for should be possible to implement.

If you can hard-wire these changes in to the game, Peter and I will handle everything to do with the Goods, Harbor and Ship xml's, which in itself, is a large undertaking. We will start with the default files and complete these before moving on to the add-ons. We will also try and enlist the help of others in this task through putting this document on the forum. We can also make all the necessary changes to the Map/Mask files, but this needn't be a priority and we can catch up with that later. We will also, of course, Beta-test the new game.

With all of these changes in place we believe that xxl will be a completely new experience! If it all works out as planned, the result will give a more realistic overview of world trade, with countries exporting goods to the areas they export them to in real life. It will give the player more to think about as well. No longer will he be able to blithely load up his biggest supertanker or bulker with anything he likes and set off to any port in the world. When the maps have been doctored, he will be forced to use smaller ships if he is to call in to smaller ports. The containership addict will be able to supply the main container ports by using feeder services, just as in real life and the main ports, in turn, will provide work for the feeder ships distributing containers to the smaller ports.

PoCxxl will be well on the way to becoming the Ultimate Cargoship Simulation.

## **List of predetermined ship's types** (left column) and **type of cargoes they can haul** (right column)

| **<kategorie_typ>** | **<sub_typ>** *or alternative* **<cargo_key>** |
|---|---|
| Crude Oil Tanker | Ta |
| Shuttle Tanker | Ta, Ts |
| Gas Tanker LPG | Tp |
| Gas Tanker LNG | Tn |
| Product Tanker | Tc |
| Asphalt Tanker (heated tanks) | Th |
| Fruit Juice Tanker | Tj |
| Wine Tanker | Tw |
| Bulk Carrier | B, Bc, Bo |
| Cement Carrier | Bz |
| OBO Carrier | Ta, Bo |
| Reefer | A, R |
| Reefer with Pax Facilities | A, R, P |
| Container Vessel | C, Ce, Cb, Cc, Cd, Ct |
| Container Vessel with Reefer Facilities | C, Ce, Cb, Cc, Cd, Cr, Ct |
| Ferries/RoRo | F, P |
| Car Carrier | V |
| Livestock Carrier | L |
| Livestock Carrier with Container Facilities | L, C, Ce, Cb, Cc, Cd, Ct |
| Heavy Lift Carrier | H |
| Liner and other passenger vessels | P |
| General Cargo | A, B, Bc, Bo, C, L |
| General Cargo with Pax Facilities | A, B, Bc, Bo, C, L, P |