

**Council**

**CNL(05)40**

*Discussion Document on the Next Steps for NASCO*

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#### **1. Introduction**

The Strategic Approach for NASCO's Next Steps, Annex 5 of document CNL(05)14, contains an extensive range of possible actions for NASCO to take in light of the Next Steps review process, a process which was undertaken in 2004 and 2005. The Council wishes to move quickly to implement these recommendations, some of which can be immediately adopted. Other recommendations require additional consideration prior to possible adoption. The Council also notes that some recommendations are closely connected to others and should be considered together in order to draft an Action Plan. Finally, it must be noted that while the Council welcomes the full Report from the Next Steps Working Group (CNL(05)14), there is a need to prioritise implementation so that the proper attention and focus can be placed on issues and account can be taken of resource limitations, both human and financial.

#### **2. General Recommendations from the Next Steps Working Group for Immediate Implementation**

The Council proposes adopting with immediate effect the following proposals made by the Next Steps Working Group (the numbers of these recommendations are those contained within the report of the Working Group):

Recommendation 2: The Council should keep its agreements under regular review and adapt them, in the light of new information as to their effectiveness.

Recommendation 3: The Council should explore the feasibility of arranging a Ministerial Conference to strengthen the Parties' commitment to the conservation of wild salmon through the NASCO Convention.

Recommendation 6: The homewater Parties should inform the relevant NASCO Commission of the management measures established or envisaged and their expected effects.

Recommendation 6 will be implemented, pending agreement on the format for the information on homewater management measures. The Secretariat will draft and circulate a format which will be subsequently agreed by the Parties for utilization at the 2006 Annual Meeting.

Recommendation 7 (modified): The Commissions of NASCO should consider whether regulatory measures for fisheries could be adopted and scientific advice from ICES sought on a biennial or multi-year basis.

Recommendation 7 is modified to include consideration of biennial or multi-year regulatory measures in all NASCO Commissions rather than just the NEAC and WGC.

Recommendation 8: The Council should continue and expand as necessary existing efforts to incorporate social and economic factors into its work.

Recommendation 9: The Council should include an item on its agenda entitled “New or emerging opportunities for, or threats to, salmon conservation and management” and request ICES and the NGOs to provide relevant information.

Recommendation 10 (partial): Stakeholder input should be solicited on standing or *ad hoc* working groups as appropriate.

Recommendation 10 is split; the first part of it is included in this section as it can be implemented immediately. The second part of the recommendation is included in section 4.2 under the recommendations requiring further consideration.

Recommendation 11: The Council should continue to support broader stakeholder participation in the Liaison Group between NASCO and the North Atlantic salmon farming industry.

Recommendation 12: The Council should periodically conduct stakeholder dialogue meetings to improve outreach and education with regard to NASCO and its work and to seek information on ways to continue to improve the Organization’s work.

Recommendation 13: The Council should encourage accredited NGOs and, as appropriate, other stakeholders to continue to improve their cooperation with NASCO.

In order to implement Recommendation 13, the Secretariat should communicate the improvements identified in the Next Steps Strategic Approach to accredited NGOs and invite further suggestions for methods to improve the coordination between NGOs and NASCO.

Recommendation 15 (modified): Initial discussion of all agenda items should occur within the Council and Commissions. For agenda items that are discussed at Heads of Delegations meetings, the decision and rationale will be provided during discussion of those items at the full Council and Commission meetings.

Recommendation 15 is modified to clarify the process for reporting from Head of Delegation meetings to the full Council and Commissions.

Recommendation 20: The Council should review its relationships with other international organizations and explore areas of mutual interest.

In order to implement Recommendation 20, the Secretariat should conduct a review of the areas identified in the Strategic Plan and present a paper to the Parties at the 2006 Annual Meeting.

### **3. Recommendations for Improved Public Relations to Raise the Profile of NASCO**

The Council agrees to the creation of a Public Relations Group.

Recommendation 14: Seek input from NASCO's accredited NGOs to the development of the Organization's media strategy.

Recommendation 16: NASCO should develop and implement a clear public relations strategy, including the establishment of a public relations group, aimed at enhancing its profile and ensuring the most effective publicity for its work and achievements.

Recommendation 17: The Secretariat should engage professional expertise to produce media products and to develop a more relevant, attractive, informative and interactive website.

Recommendation 18: NASCO should develop links with educational programmes and establish the means to achieve mutual benefits from such alignment.

Recommendation 19: The Council should consider the need for additional reports to improve the public understanding of information relevant to NASCO's activities.

Recommendations 14, 16, 17, 18 and 19, above all relate to improving the methods for disseminating information on the effectiveness of NASCO.

The Public Relations Group will be composed of representatives of the Parties and will draft a public relations strategy with the objectives of enhancing the profile of NASCO and ensuring the most effective publicity for its work and achievements. The Public Relations Group will involve NGOs as appropriate. The aim is to help NASCO gain the support it needs to further its conservation work. Contracting Parties should be encouraged to involve staff in the Public Relations Group who specialise in outreach and education.

The Public Relations Group will develop a public relations strategy which will identify public relations products and services and present a plan for

implementation including identification of priorities, necessary resources, and timeframe for implementation. The strategy will include:

- (1) Identification of **messages** NASCO wants to deliver, including inter alia:
  - a. Annual reports on the status of salmon stocks around the North Atlantic;
  - b. Publicity for forthcoming events;
  - c. Links to and from appropriate websites;
  - d. Reports of meetings of the Council, Commissions and Working Groups;
  - e. Resolutions, Protocols, Guidelines, Codes of Practice, and other documents reflecting best practice for salmon management and conservation;
  - f. Information from national inventories;
  - g. The NASCO salmon rivers database;
  - h. Success stories, new threats and opportunities.
- (2) Identification of target **audiences**
- (3) Identification of **products and methods** for delivering the message, including brochures, website and other promotional materials
  - a. A media strategy, which will be developed with the appropriate involvement of the NGOs
  - b. Consideration of the use of stakeholder dialogue meetings to improve outreach and education with regard to NASCO and its work and to seek information on ways to continue to improve the Organization's work
  - c. Consideration of the need for additional reports to improve the public understanding of information relevant to NASCO's activities
- (4) Identification of educational programs where NASCO could provide a link on its webpage

The strategy will identify options for developing and implementing the above, including whether the identified products and methods can be conducted by the Contracting Parties and/or NASCO, or whether professional expertise would be required.

#### 4. Recommendations Requiring Further Consideration

##### Creation of a Task Force

In order to further consider the recommendations on implementation, commitment, accountability, transparency and inclusivity as outlined in the following sub-sections, a Task Force representing the Heads of Delegation will meet intersessionally. To the extent possible, this Task Force should meet in combination with other NASCO meetings, conducting its work electronically where possible. The report of the Task Force will be made available to the Parties well in advance of the next Annual Meeting so that its recommendations can be applied to that meeting.

##### 4.1 Implementation, Commitment and Accountability

The Council recognizes that recommendations 1, 4 and 5 in the Next Steps Working Group Strategic Approach document are closely related. The development of implementation plans by the Parties or relevant jurisdictions, reporting on these plans, and evaluation of progress should therefore be viewed together. These recommendations should be given the highest priority as identified by the Next Steps process and must be comprehensively and thoughtfully developed intersessionally by the Task Force representing the Heads of Delegation.

The Recommendations from the Next Steps Working Group are as follows:

**Recommendation 1:** Each Party or relevant jurisdiction should develop an implementation plan for meeting the objectives of NASCO's agreements. Each Party or relevant jurisdiction should then report on steps taken pursuant to the Plan. These approaches should be evaluated after a trial period.

**Recommendation 4:** Reporting to the Council on progress in achieving the objectives should be conducted in a Special Session so as to allow direct NGO involvement, greater opportunity for discussion, and critical review of the reports made by the Parties in implementation of agreements.

**Recommendation 5:** The Council should establish an *ad hoc* group to support the President in determining the conclusions of the Special Sessions at which progress reports on Implementation Plans have been presented and reviewed.

In order to fully consider the Next Steps Working Group recommendations above, the Task Force should address the following:

- 1) Whether a single Implementation Plan should be developed which immediately addresses all of the following NASCO's agreements or whether they should be developed separately and sequentially:
  - a. management of salmon fisheries (reference Decision Structure, SCPA(02)16);

- b. habitat protection and restoration (reference Plan of Action, CNL(01)51);
  - c. minimising impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics (reference Williamsburg Resolution, CNL(04)54(revised)).
- 2) Components and Format of the Implementation Plan, including consideration of the following aspects identified during the Next Steps process:
  - a. identification of actions taken or planned by a Party or relevant jurisdiction which aim to achieve the objectives of the NASCO agreements and guidelines,
  - b. information on how the Council's socio-economic guidelines relate to these actions and agreements,
  - c. a timeframe for actions which have not yet been achieved,
  - d. measurable goals for implementation and reporting so that progress can be monitored.
  - e. the trial period for the implementation plan approach
- 3) Format and Structure of the Reporting Special Session, including:
  - a. Format of presentations by the Parties
  - b. Role of NGOs in the Reporting Special Session
  - c. Consideration of quantitative or measurable evaluation criteria which clearly identify common goals for implementation and establish scores that will be applied to the Parties reports.
- 4) Consideration of Establishing an Ad Hoc Group to be utilized in evaluating reporting Special Sessions. This consideration should address the following:
  - a. membership of the Ad Hoc Group;
  - b. the role of the Ad Hoc Group in developing objectives and elements in advance of the reporting Special Session which should facilitate assessment of the extent of implementation and effectiveness of the actions taken in achieving the objectives of the agreement
  - c. the role of the Ad Hoc Group during the reporting special session including possibly assisting the President and/or preparing a report card

#### **4.2 Transparency and Inclusivity**

The Next Steps Working Group considered the existing rules governing NGO participation, particularly the rule prohibiting the issuance of press releases after the close of the opening session until NASCO has agreed its own press release. With respect to this rule, it was clarified that the intention was to ensure an effective and efficient meeting process, and not to diminish the effectiveness of stakeholder involvement in the work of NASCO or to limit the ability of NGOs to offer constructive criticism. The Parties underscored the common interests between NASCO, accredited NGOs, and certain other stakeholders and recognised the key role they play in helping NASCO fulfill its mandate. The Next Steps Working Group urged the Council to strongly encourage those NGOs that have not already done so to reconsider acceptance of the communications rule, particularly in the light of the progress made during the Next Steps process.

Recommendation 10 (partial): The Council should seek ways to increase NGO involvement in its meetings by amending current NGO observer rules to provide discretion to the NASCO President and Commission Chairmen to recognise requests for the floor by observers on any agenda item under discussion before and after debate by the Parties on that item.

Recommendation 10 is split; the second part is included in this section and the first part is included in the first section of general recommendations for immediate implementation.

The Task Force should consider modification of the rule for current conditions for attendance of observers at NASCO meetings in order to address this Next Steps Working Group recommendation.