

Council

CNL(06)14

Report on Progress with Implementing the Strategic Approach for NASCO's Next Steps

At its Twenty-Second Annual Meeting in Vichy, France, the Council reviewed the report of its Working Group on the 'Next Steps for NASCO'. It was recognised that this report contained an extensive range of recommendations and in order to implement these recommendations the Council adopted a 'Strategic Approach' for NASCO's 'Next Steps' (CNL(05)49) which identified decisions for immediate implementation and others requiring further consideration. The latter were referred to a Task Force Chaired by Mr Gudmundur Helgason (Iceland), and the report of its meeting is presented separately as document CNL(06)16. The purpose of this brief report is to summarise progress on those decisions taken by the Council in Vichy which it was agreed should be implemented immediately. This progress is outlined in the attached table. The Council is asked to review this progress and decide whether any further action is required.

Secretary
Edinburgh
7 April, 2006

| Decision | Summary of action taken |
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| Decision 1: The Council will keep its agreements under regular review and adapt them, in the light of new information as to their effectiveness. | The 'Next Steps' Task Force has developed guidelines on the preparation of implementation plans and on reporting on progress. Progress in developing implementation plans will be reviewed at the Twenty-Third Annual Meeting. Reporting on the actions taken in accordance with these plans will commence in 2007 (or possibly 2008 for the focus areas) and in the light of these reports it will be possible to better assess the need for revisions to the agreements. Most NASCO agreements have been developed in the last five years. The Williamsburg Resolution was amended at the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting by the inclusion of the US/Canadian MoU on introductions and transfers, and it may be further amended in the light of the comments from the International Salmon Farmers' Association. The Council will need to continue to review these agreements and adopt them as necessary in the light of feedback from the Parties and improved understanding. |
| Decision 2: The Council will explore the feasibility of arranging a Ministerial Conference to strengthen the Parties' commitment to the conservation of wild salmon through the NASCO Convention. | The Task Force concluded that it would not be feasible to arrange a Ministerial Conference at present. If, at a later date, a Ministerial Conference was proposed, clear objectives would be needed, e.g. to launch the implementation plans or the SALSEA programme, and the NGOs might be able to play an effective role in influencing participation by Ministers. |
| Decision 3: The home-water Parties will inform the relevant NASCO Commission of the management measures established or envisaged and their expected effects. | One of the key issues identified in the Strategic Approach with regard to management of salmon fisheries was the need to explore opportunities to improve the fairness and balance in management of distant-water fisheries. The Task Force has proposed that this element of reporting should be included under the annual reporting on the implementation plans, and Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) confirmed that this arrangement was adequate to allow it to assess fairness and balance in management of fisheries. When reporting under the implementation plans commences in 2007, this Decision will have been implemented. |
| Decision 4: The Commissions of NASCO will consider whether regulatory measures for fisheries could be adopted and scientific advice from ICES sought on a biennial or multi-year basis. | The Task Force recognised that it would be beneficial to have multi-year regulatory measures, not least so as to free up some time for Special Sessions. It was noted, however, that successful agreement of multi-year regulatory measures may or may not be accompanied by a reduction in the frequency of scientific advice because of the importance of maintaining the scientific databases and ensuring availability of information on any change in abundance that would require changes to the measure. The Council has asked ICES to provide multi-annual catch advice for the period 2006-2008 and advise on the minimum information needed which would signal a significant change in the previously provided advice for each Commission area. The Standing Scientific Committee has prepared a discussion document on the options to change the request for advice in the event that multi-annual regulatory measures are agreed, CNL(06)12. In the light of discussions by the Commissions on multi-annual regulatory measures, the Council will be able to decide whether it wishes to modify its request for scientific advice. |

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| <p>Decision 5: The Council will continue and expand, as necessary, existing efforts to incorporate social and economic factors into its work.</p> | <p>The Council has established a Technical Working Group led by the US to develop a bio-economic modeling approach that would allow social and economic factors to be integrated into a management model for Atlantic salmon. It is anticipated that this Working Group will meet in the autumn of 2006 and in the light of this Group's findings the Council may wish to consider the appropriate next steps.</p> |
| <p>Decision 6: The Council will 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.</p> | <p>The Council's agenda now includes an item entitled "New or emerging opportunities for, or threats to, salmon conservation and management" and ICES has been requested to provide relevant information. The Task Force has recommended arrangements for NGO interventions on agenda items. It will be important that where new or emerging threats are identified, NASCO and the Parties respond quickly and effectively.</p> |
| <p>Decision 7: Stakeholder input will be solicited on standing or <i>ad hoc</i> working groups as appropriate.</p> | <p>NGOs have already participated in meetings of the 'Next Steps' Working Group and Task Force and the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board. The Task Force has proposed an amendment to the conditions governing observer status to allow input to working groups, etc., to be solicited from stakeholders. It will be a matter for the Council to resolve which stakeholders are invited to participate in future working groups in the light of the Terms of Reference of each group.</p> |
| <p>Decision 8: The Council will continue to support broader stakeholder participation in the Liaison Group between NASCO and the North Atlantic salmon farming industry.</p> | <p>The Council has indicated its concern at the continuing reluctance of the salmon farming industry to allow NGOs to participate in the Liaison Group meetings. The President has written to the industry encouraging it to reconsider its position with regard to NGO participation. One possibility suggested by the Council was to encourage the industry to allow NGOs to participate in part of the Liaison Group meeting. This proposal will be explored with the industry. The Secretariat will meet informally with the industry in May and will raise this matter again.</p> |
| <p>Decision 9: The Council will 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.</p> | <p>In 2005 the Council held stakeholder consultation (dialogue) meetings in London, UK and Portland, Maine, USA. These meetings were welcomed by stakeholders and provided valuable feedback on NASCO's work. The report of the meetings was presented at the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting, CNL(05)13, and the suggestions we received at these meetings were taken into account by the Next Steps Working Group in developing its recommendations. It would, perhaps, be appropriate to consider holding a second set of consultation meetings in about two or three years' time (i.e. in 2008 or 2009).</p> |
| <p>Decision 10: The Council will encourage accredited NGOs and, as appropriate, other stakeholders to continue to improve their cooperation with NASCO.</p> | <p>The Secretary contacted the Chairman of NASCO's NGOs to communicate the improvements identified in the Strategic Approach and to seek feedback from the NGOs on ways to further improve the cooperation between the NGOs and NASCO. The Chairman of the NGOs will be invited to advise the Council of any ideas the NGOs have in this respect. The NGOs appear to be content with the progress being made on cooperation.</p> |

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| <p>Decision 11: Initial discussion of all agenda items will 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.</p> | <p>This Decision was implemented in Vichy and will continue to apply at the Twenty-Third, and future, Annual Meetings.</p> |
| <p>Decision 12: The Council will review its relationships with other international organizations and explore areas of mutual interest.</p> | <p>A review of the areas identified in the Strategic Plan and possible opportunities to explore these with other international organizations will be presented, CNL(06)15.</p> |
| <p>Decision 13: The Council will create a Public Relations Group.</p> | <p>The composition and working methods of this Group were discussed by the Task Force, and the Chairman agreed to consult with Heads of Delegations with the aim of ensuring an appropriate mix of expertise on the group. Professional media consultants, Porter Novelli, were engaged to undertake a trial public relations exercise in the UK in 2005/2006 to raise NASCO's profile. Several articles have appeared in national newspapers and trade journals and some initial lessons have been learned. On the basis of this trial, the media consultants will develop recommendations on a future media strategy for consideration by the Public Relations Group.</p> |
| <p>Decision 14: The Council will seek input from NASCO's accredited NGOs to the development of the Organization's media strategy.</p> | <p>The Chairman of NASCO's NGOs has indicated that the NGOs, particularly those in North America, have considerable expertise and experience in public relations work and that they support a partnership with NASCO through the Public Relations Group.</p> |
| <p>Decision 15: NASCO will 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.</p> | <p>It is hoped that the Public Relations Group will meet during the winter of 2006/2007 and report to the Council on a public relations strategy, taking into account the advice from the media consultants and input from NASCO's NGOs.</p> |

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| <p>Decision 16: The Secretariat will engage professional expertise to produce media products and to develop a more relevant, attractive, informative and interactive website.</p> | <p>The publication ‘NASCO’s Twenty-Year Milestones and Next Steps – A Vision for the Future’ has been extremely well received and is considered a very useful summary of NASCO’s work and future challenges. It has been widely circulated. It may be possible to produce this document in other languages if the Parties so wish. Work in re-designing NASCO’s website has begun and transferring the rivers database has introduced an interactive element to the site. However, the website does not contain information on the work of NASCO in a format that would appeal to the general public and we will be asking our IT consultants to develop a more attractive, informative and interactive site. In particular, we would like to include more information on the biology of the species, the status of stocks, the pressures on the resource and the measures being taken through international cooperation to address these.</p> |
| <p>Decision 17: NASCO will develop links with educational programmes and establish the means to achieve mutual benefits from such alignment.</p> | <p>This aspect might be reviewed through the Public Relations Group.</p> |
| <p>Decision 18: The Council will consider the need for additional reports to improve the public understanding of information relevant to NASCO’s activities.</p> | <p>As reported under Decision 16, the publication ‘NASCO’s Twenty-Year Milestones and Next Steps – A Vision for the Future’ is considered to provide a useful summary of NASCO’s work. The need for additional publications could be reviewed in the light of improvements to the NASCO website, which might be seen as a more effective mechanism for making information available to the general public.</p> |