

***Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of NASCO Implementation Plans
and for Reporting on Progress***

1. NASCO's Goals and Objectives

NASCO and its Parties have agreed to adopt and apply a Precautionary Approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of salmon in order to protect the resource and preserve the environments in which it lives. To this end, NASCO has adopted a number of Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines which address the Organization's principal areas of concern for the management of salmon stocks. The overall goals for NASCO and its Parties in relation to the three theme areas are summarised below:

- ***Management of salmon fisheries:*** promote the diversity and abundance of salmon stocks and maintain all stocks above their conservation limits.
- ***Protection and restoration of Atlantic salmon habitat:*** maintain and, where possible, increase the current productive capacity of Atlantic salmon habitat.
- ***Management of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics:*** minimise the possible adverse impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics on the wild stocks of Atlantic salmon, including working with industry stakeholders, where appropriate.

The principal Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines that relate to these three theme areas are as follows:

- NASCO Guidelines for the Management of Salmon Fisheries, CNL(09)43;
- NASCO Guidelines for the Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat, CNL(10)51;
- Resolution by the Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean to Minimise Impacts from Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenics on the Wild Salmon Stocks, CNL(06)48, the 'Williamsburg Resolution';
- Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks, SLG(09)5.

The purpose of Implementation Plans and Annual Progress Reports is to provide a simple and transparent approach for reporting on the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines by the jurisdictions.

This document describes the structure and content of the Implementation Plans, the criteria that will be used for their acceptance and review, and the procedures for reporting and evaluating progress through the Annual Progress Reports.

2. Implementation Plans

The first Implementation Plans were developed in 2007 and the first cycle of reporting was completed in 2011. During this period, reports on the actions taken under the Implementation

Plans were made through detailed Focus Area Reports, which were critically reviewed, and Annual Reports.

Following a comprehensive review of the strengths and weaknesses of the first reporting cycle, it was agreed that Implementation Plans will be the key document in the second reporting cycle but that greater emphasis will be placed on: the actions to be taken over a five year period; clearly identifiable measurable outcomes and timescales; and appropriate monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures taken. The Implementation Plans will be focused around the three main theme areas.

2.1 Structure, Format and Content of Implementation Plans

The Implementation Plans will be prepared using the agreed template, CNL(12)42. It is important that Implementation Plans are presented in a clear and straight-forward manner so that they are easily understood by both managers and stakeholders. It is anticipated that an Implementation Plan would normally:

- apply to all the stocks/fisheries managed within a jurisdiction;
- apply for a period of 5 years (2013-2018), and generally require no annual modification unless circumstances change significantly;
- be clear and concise;
- draw on information contained in the first Implementation Plans;
- be prepared in consultation with NGOs and other relevant stakeholders and industries;
- address the issues on which additional actions were recommended by the FAR Review Groups in the first reporting cycle;
- specify the actions to be taken, the timescales for these actions, the expected outcomes and the approach to monitoring and enforcement so that progress can be subject to critical evaluation.

By way of clarification, **actions**, which are the key element of the Implementation Plans, are specific tangible activities that a Party or jurisdiction intends to undertake during the five year term of the Implementation Plan (i.e. during 2013-2018) to address threats and management challenges. In general, actions are implemented as part of a strategy or plan to achieve a desired goal or vision. A vision may be the elimination of escapes from aquaculture cages; an **action** may be to require containment management systems for all marine cages by 2015. Similarly, a vision may be to reduce exploitation in a mixed-stock fishery and an action may be to reduce the netting effort through a reduction in the open season.

Measurable outcomes are a measure of success of the action. If an action is taken by a Party or jurisdiction it should result in a change – this change is the measurable outcome that flows from that action. In the above examples, the measurable outcome of the action of requiring containment management systems could be the demonstration of a reduction in the number of escapees detected in salmon rivers and for the action to reduce the fishing season, the measurable outcome may be reduced catches in the mixed-stock fishery and increased spawning escapement.

2.2 Review of Implementation Plans

Implementation Plans will be subject to a critical evaluation by a Review Group appointed by the Council. The purpose of the evaluation will be to ensure that, as far as possible, the

Implementation Plans provide a fair and equitable account of the actions that each jurisdiction plans to take to implement NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines.

2.3 *Composition of the Review Group*

The Implementation Plan Review Group will comprise:

- one representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland);
- three representatives of the other Parties (preferably one from North America and two from Europe);
- two representatives of the NGOs (preferably one from Europe and one from North America); and
- one scientific representative from the Standing Scientific Committee.

The members of the Review Group will be appointed specifically to represent NASCO not their Party or Organization. To provide continuity, they should normally be appointed to serve for a period of up to three years and will also undertake the evaluation of the Annual Progress Reports. The NASCO Secretariat will coordinate the Review Group's work but will not serve as reviewers. The Review Group will also review the Annual Progress Reports (see paragraph 3.2).

2.4 *Initial Assessment of Implementation Plans*

The aim of the initial assessment is to ensure that time is not wasted on a full critical review of Implementation Plans that clearly contain significant omissions. Following submission, and if time permits, the NASCO Secretariat will, therefore, check the Draft Implementation Plans for the following information:

1. Provision of answers to all the questions except where these are indicated to be inappropriate for the jurisdiction;
2. Provision of lists of threats to wild salmon and challenges for management related to the three theme areas, including specific issues for recommended actions identified for the jurisdiction in the reports of the FAR Review Groups;
3. Provision of actions to address the main threats and challenges which include measurable outcome(s), monitoring that will be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the action and the planned timescale for the action.

Where there are gaps in the Draft Implementation Plans in any of the above areas they will be returned to the jurisdiction for further drafting. In cases of uncertainty, the Secretariat will refer to the Review Group.

Once accepted (i.e. following re-submission, where appropriate), the Implementation Plans will then be made available on the NASCO website to permit equal access to the information to all stakeholders.

2.5 *Critical Evaluation of Implementation Plans*

Once accepted the Implementation Plans will be examined by a Review Group which will evaluate the quality of the information provided in the above areas and determine whether

this provides a fair and equitable basis for assessing the progress that the jurisdiction will make in implementing NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. Answers to each question will be assessed as:

1. Satisfactory answers/information.
2. Unclear or incomplete answers/information.
3. Clear omissions or inadequacies in answers/information.

Implementation Plans which include answers in categories 2 and 3 above will be returned to jurisdictions for modification with clear guidance on the way that the Review Group considers that the Implementation Plan should be improved. These assessments will not be made public at this stage.

Re-submitted Implementation Plans will be reassessed by the Review Group to determine whether the areas highlighted have been addressed or a satisfactory explanation of the original content has been provided.

2.6 Reporting to the Annual Meeting

Where the Review Group considers that there are still clear omissions or inadequacies in the answers/information provided (category 3), these shortcomings will be listed in their report to the Council. The Review Group will present its evaluation of the Implementation Plans to the Annual Meeting of the Council, highlighting examples of good practice within the Plans. The President will lead the discussions with jurisdictions concerning any outstanding questions about their Implementation Plans and those jurisdictions will have an opportunity to revise their Implementation Plans after the Annual Meeting.

2.7 Schedules for Submission, Review and Distribution of Implementation Plans

In order for the review process to function effectively, the following schedule is proposed:

Date / deadline	Responsibility	Action required
30 June 2012	Secretary	Requests submission of Implementation Plans
1 February 2013	Parties/ jurisdictions	<u>Deadline</u> for submission of Implementation Plans to Secretary
7 February 2013	Secretary	Distribute Implementation Plans to Review Group Upload IPs to NASCO website
February/March 2013	Review Group	Meets and develops its evaluation of the Implementation Plans
1 April 2013	Secretary	Return Implementation Plans requiring modification to jurisdictions with clear guidance on the Review Group's recommendations for improvements
15 May 2013	Parties/ jurisdictions	<u>Deadline</u> for submission of final Implementation Plans
1 June 2013	Secretary	Upload updated Implementation Plans and Review Group's assessments to NASCO website
Annual Meeting 2013	Review Group	Present report to the Council
1 September 2013	Parties/ jurisdictions	<u>Deadline</u> for submission of Final Implementation Plans to NASCO

30 September 2013	Secretary	Upload Final Implementation plans to NASCO website
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3. Annual Progress Reports

The primary purposes of the Annual Progress Reports are to provide details of:

- any changes to the management regime for salmon and consequent changes to the Implementation Plan;
- actions that have been taken under the Implementation Plan in the previous year;
- significant changes to the status of stocks, and a report on catches; and
- actions taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

3.1 Structure, Format and Content of Annual Progress Reports

Each year the jurisdictions should prepare Annual Progress Reports using the agreed reporting template CNL(12)43. These should provide information on progress against actions in their Implementation Plans relating to management of salmon fisheries (section 2.8), habitat protection and restoration (section 3.4) and aquaculture and related activities (section 4.8) as well as available information on monitoring the effectiveness of those actions and their enforcement. In addition, details of any significant changes to the status of stocks and any changes to the Implementation Plan should be included in the report. Details of actions taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention are also needed by the Council. To aid completion of the report, the Secretariat will incorporate the actions specified in the Implementation Plan in the template for each jurisdiction.

3.2 Critical Review of Annual Progress Reports

The Annual Progress Reports will be subject to a critical evaluation by a Review Group appointed by the Council (see section 2.3 above). The purpose of the evaluation will be to ensure that jurisdictions have provided a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating the actions detailed in their Implementation Plans along with the information required under the Convention.

The Review Group will evaluate the Annual Progress Reports, by correspondence, to assess the progress that has been made on each of the actions detailed in the Implementation Plan. Where there are shortcomings, the Review Group will develop a list of questions which will be sent to the jurisdiction. Jurisdictions will be asked to respond to these at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

3.3 Schedules for Submission, Review and Distribution of Annual Progress Reports

In order for the review process to function effectively within a limited time period, the following schedule is proposed:

Date	Responsibility	Action required
5 January	Secretariat	Send the template for Annual Progress Reports to each jurisdiction
1 March	Secretariat	Send reminders for completion of Annual Progress Reports
1 April	Parties/	Deadline for submission of Annual Progress Reports to

	jurisdictions Secretariat	Secretariat Annual Progress reports made available on the website
1 May	Review Group	Completion of review and provision of list of questions for jurisdictions, where required.
Annual Meeting	Parties/ jurisdictions	Respond to any questions from the Review Group at Annual Meeting of the Council