

CNL(13)38

Action Plan for taking forward the recommendations of the External Performance Review and the review of the ‘Next Steps’ for NASCO

The Council has recognised that the completion of the first cycle of reporting and review under the ‘Next Steps’ process and receipt of the External Performance Review report provide it with an opportunity to revisit its vision for the future of NASCO including an evaluation of priorities. The Council has moved quickly to implement many of the recommendations arising from these reviews and is making progress in implementing others. The tables below present details of the actions taken to date and the Council’s decisions on future actions. Section 1 contains actions that have been, or are in the process of being, implemented and for which there may be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes. Section 2 contains new actions in response to recommendations. Section 3 contains actions to strengthen NASCO’s work on the management of salmon fisheries. This Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Report of the Inter-sessional Meeting of the Parties, FVN(13)12.

Section 1: Recommendations of the External Performance Review Panel (EPR) and ‘Next Steps’ Review Group (NS) that have been implemented or are planned and for which there may be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

	Recommendation	Actions taken
	NASCO’s ‘Next Steps’ Process	
EPR1	The ‘Next Steps’ process has succeeded in undertaking a comprehensive and critical review of the work of the Organization to date and in enhancing efforts on the current areas of focus of the Organization. This progress should continue, based on the Strategic Approach, which has provided a comprehensive framework for the work to be undertaken and for improvements to be made in the implementation of NASCO Agreements.	<i>The Council has agreed to proceed with a new cycle of Implementation Plans (IPs) covering the period 2013 -2018 and Annual Progress Reports (APRs). The ‘Next Steps’ review process proposed only minor changes to the Strategic Approach.</i> <i>The EPR considered that the Strategic Approach had provided a comprehensive framework for the work of NASCO and it will be used in the next cycle of reporting.</i>

EPR 2	<p>In the next reporting cycle, the Parties should continue their efforts to implement the decisions and to address the issues identified in the Strategic Approach. It will be important for the second cycle to address areas identified in the first cycle of the 'Next Steps' process for additional action. Consideration should be given to convening an FAR special session on this topic. Progress on the socio-economic aspects of Atlantic salmon and initiatives for endangered populations is also encouraged.</p>	<p><i>The IP template adopted in 2012, CNL(12)42, indicates that jurisdictions should take into account the specific issues on which action was recommended in the first cycle of reporting. These issues were collated by the Secretariat and sent to jurisdictions with the request to develop new IPs. An initial assessment of the IPs will be undertaken to ensure the information requested in this template has been provided and where there are gaps the IPs will be returned to the jurisdiction for further drafting. The IPs will then be evaluated by a Review Group. The findings of the evaluation will be considered at the 2013 Annual Meeting. A Special Session on socio-economics is to be held during the 2014 Annual Meeting. The IP template seeks information on social and economic aspects and on how threatened and endangered stocks are identified and of actions to address threats to them so these issues should be addressed in the new IPs. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i></p>
EPR 3	<p>In terms of reporting, the next cycle should focus on assessing the effectiveness of the measures taken by the Parties. The IPs should contain clearly described identifiable, measurable outcomes and timescales. The Parties are encouraged to prepare IPs and FARs in a timely fashion, including through the possibility of electronic filing.</p>	<p><i>The Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress, CNL(12)44, indicate that IPs should 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. The IP template, CNL(12)42, has been structured to ensure that, for each action, information is provided on the expected outcome and timescale and guidance has been provided on what constitutes an action and a measurable outcome. An initial assessment of the IPs will be undertaken to ensure the information requested in this template has been provided and where there are gaps the IPs will be returned to the jurisdiction for further drafting. The IPs will then be evaluated by a Review Group. The findings of the evaluation will be considered at the 2013 Annual Meeting. In the next cycle of reporting, FARs are to be replaced by APRs that will be reviewed. Timetables for submission of IPs and APRs have been developed. The APRs will be requested in early January each year and the Secretariat will send out reminders in early March, one month before the deadline for submission (1 April). Both the IP and APR templates will be available electronically. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i></p>
EPR 4	<p>In the long-term, the 'Next Steps' process should consider cross-cutting issues, such as climate change. It should also consider conducting a review of the functions and role of the Council including the possibility of vesting it with binding decision-making authority.</p>	<p><i>The Council has agreed that theme-based Special Sessions could be helpful to NASCO and procedures for planning and organising these Special Sessions agreed (see CNL(12)12 for details). A number of priority topics have been identified including management of mixed-stock fisheries (MSFs), managing salmon under a changing climate and fish passage at hydro-electric facilities. It has been agreed</i></p>

		<p><i>that there will be a Special Session on socio-economics at the 2014 Annual Meeting and a focus on MSFs in NEAC in 2013. Information on climate change impacts on salmon was presented at the ‘Salmon Summit’ and should be taken into account in developing future research needs. ICES has been requested to report on any significant advances in understanding of the biology of Atlantic salmon that is pertinent to NASCO, including information on the potential implications of climate change for salmon management.</i></p> <p><i>The actions relating to modernizing and strengthening the work of NASCO are detailed in sections 2 and 3 below.</i></p>
Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean		
EPR24	The institutional structure should be reviewed and amended as appropriate to include subsidiary bodies and a Secretariat, as well as rules for appointment of a Secretary and the duties of the Secretary. Authority and procedures for the establishment of <i>ad hoc</i> bodies should be provided.	<i>Article 12 of the Convention states that the Council shall appoint a Secretary and describes the functions of the Secretary. Rule 28 of the Council’s Rules of Procedure states that the Council may establish such other subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary and shall determine their composition and terms of reference.</i>
EPR27	It is recommended that, as appropriate, consideration be given to adoption of rules relating to the establishment of NASCO subsidiary and <i>ad hoc</i> bodies.	<i>Rule 28 of the Council’s Rules of Procedure states that the Council may establish such other subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary and shall determine their composition and terms of reference.</i>
EPR32	The description of the functions of the Secretary in article 12 should be reviewed, expanded and modernized to reflect actual practice. This can be elaborated in rules of procedure.	<i>Article 12.2 states that the functions of the Secretary include performing such functions as follow from other provisions of the Convention or as the Council may determine. This provides the flexibility for the Council to determine the functions of the Secretary adaptively in response to the work of the Organization.</i>
EPR33	The regulatory and other measures reflecting the scientific advice should continue to be set and, in this regard, efforts to develop a risk framework for the Faroese fishery are encouraged	<i>Multi-annual regulatory measures or decisions were agreed for both the West Greenland and Faroese fisheries in 2012. The development of a risk framework is underway for the Faroese fishery.</i>

EPR 36	Obligations for Parties to provide information should be reviewed and updated, consistent with the recommendations of the 'Next Steps' Review Group and the Working Group on Future Reporting. The type of information required by the Organization to meet the challenges identified in the 'Next Steps' process should be prioritized and identified, and information requirements concerning outcomes of actions taken to implement NASCO programmes or decisions should be required.	<i>In 2012, the Council adopted all of the recommendations of the Working Group on Future Reporting, CNL(12)12 and templates for both IPs and APRs were agreed that specify the information sought, including details of monitoring programmes and expected outcomes of actions developed to address threats. The IP template, CNL912)42, seeks information on the three main 'focus areas' of management of fisheries, habitat protection and restoration, and aquaculture and related activities (including G.salaris and transgenics). Information is sought on how socio-economic factors are included under management decisions and on how threatened and endangered stocks are identified.</i>
Conservation and Management		
EPR 41	NASCO should ensure that the precautionary approach is used to the same extent in managing all impacts of human activity on the full life-cycle of salmon in rivers, estuaries, coastal areas and the open ocean.	<i>NASCO's agreements developed under the Precautionary Approach relate to management of fisheries, habitat protection and restoration and aquaculture and related activities. Guidelines both on incorporating socio-economic factors in decisions under the Precautionary Approach and on stock rebuilding programmes have also been developed. The IP template, CNL(12)42, requests that jurisdictions take account of the specific actions identified in the first reporting cycle to ensure consistency with these agreements (see EPR 2 and EPR43). There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i> <i>By-catch of salmon in pelagic fisheries for other species is referred to in the Agreement on the Adoption of a Precautionary Approach (see EPR10 below).</i>
EPR 42	NASCO should ensure that the WSSD-JPOI commitment to maintain or restore stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield with the aim of achieving these goals for depleted stocks on an urgent basis, where possible not later than 2015, is taken into account, including in the context of the 'Next Steps' process.	<i>NASCO's Agreement on Adoption of a Precautionary Approach, CNL(98)46, states that stocks should be maintained above conservation limits (CLs) by the use of management targets (MTs) and that stock rebuilding programmes should be undertaken for stocks that are below these CLs. ICES advises that conservation limits should be set at a level that will achieve long-term maximum sustainable yield. Progress towards establishment and attainment of these CLs and MTs will be evaluated in the next cycle of IPs and APRs. The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on stock status relative to reference points (conservation limits, management targets or other measures of abundance) so as to provide a baseline for future comparison. The IP template also seeks information on any fisheries permitted to operate on stocks that are below their reference point and the approach to managing them to promote stock rebuilding. A major factor influencing salmon abundance is mortality at sea and this is constraining the ability to achieve stock rebuilding goals.</i>

		<i>Currently, the stated management objectives for Atlantic salmon stocks in the US and the Scotia-Fundy Region of Canada are a 25% increase in returns of 2SW salmon from the average returns in 1992-1996. This rebuilding objective was established in light of the extremely depleted state of these endangered populations. However, selection of this management objective is inconsistent with NASCO's Agreement on the Adoption of the Precautionary Approach, Action Plan for the Application of the Precautionary Approach, NASCO Guidelines for the Management of Salmon Fisheries, and scientific advice from ICES. The North American Commission has, therefore, agreed to review these management objectives.</i>
EPR 43	Noting that NASCO has, in the SALSEA Programme, addressed the problem of estimating sea mortality, it is important to cover the sea areas stretching from estuaries to the high seas, the phase of the life cycle where the salmon leaves natal waters, to the same extent as other phases of the life cycle.	<i>The SALSEA Programme was a comprehensive programme involving freshwater, estuarine, in-shore and high seas elements, although the marine surveys were focused on post-smolts and on improving understanding of distribution and migration at sea. A Sub-Group of the SAG has met and provided recommendations to the IASRB for future research for consideration during the 2013 Annual Meeting.</i>
EPR 46	Through the 'Next Steps' process, NASCO has addressed some of the ambiguities or inconsistencies in its instruments relating to fisheries management. In future reporting, information should be provided by the Parties on the interplay between stock conservation needs and incorporation of social and economic factors in decision-making, for both single and mixed-stock fisheries. In particular, clear indications should be given of how decisions were taken to permit exploitation of stocks known to be below their reference points, where information on stock status was lacking, and the consequences of these decisions for stock rebuilding.	<i>The IP template, CNL(12)42, requests that jurisdictions identify any fisheries permitted to operate on salmon stocks that are below their reference point and describe the approach taken to managing them that still promotes stock rebuilding. Jurisdictions are also requested to describe how socio-economic factors are taken into account in making decisions on fisheries management. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>
EPR 47	The Parties are encouraged to report on issues relating to the management of salmon fisheries in a prompt and timely fashion.	<i>The IP Guidelines, CNL(12)44, specify the timetable for submission of IPs and APRs. Reminders will be issued. There will be a need to monitor compliance with these timelines.</i>
EPR 48	As recommended by the 'Next Steps' Review Group, there is a need for further progress to be made in the management of salmon fisheries as part of the next cycle of the 'Next Steps' process.	<i>The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to fisheries and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>

EPR 49	The Parties are encouraged to report on issues relating to the protection and restoration of salmon habitat in a timely fashion.	<i>The IP Guidelines, CNL(12)44, specify the timetable for submission of IPs and APRs. Reminders will be issued. There will be a need to monitor compliance with these timelines.</i>
EPR 50	As recommended by the 'Next Steps' Review Group, there is a need for further progress to be made in the protection and preservation of salmon habitat as part of the next cycle of the 'Next Steps' process.	<i>The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to habitat protection and restoration, and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>
EPR 51	If there is to be a balance between measures aimed at ending mixed-stock fisheries in the areas beyond fisheries jurisdiction and measures ending mixed-stock fisheries within fisheries jurisdiction, NASCO should aim at managing mixed-stock fisheries in the North Atlantic to protect the weakest of the contributing stocks.	<i>The NASCO Convention does not permit salmon fishing beyond areas of fisheries jurisdiction and no activity by vessels from non-NASCO Parties has been detected in international waters since the early 1990s (see EPR6). Under the IP template, CNL(12)42, jurisdictions are requested to describe how MSFs are defined, indicate the mean catch in these fisheries over the last 5 years and describe how they are managed to ensure that all contributing stocks are meeting their conservation objectives. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>
EPR 52	Additional progress is needed towards achieving the international goals for sea lice and containment.	<i>The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to aquaculture and related activities, and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>
EPR 53	As recommended by the FAR Review Group, there is a need for further progress to address the impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics as part of the next cycle of the 'Next Steps' process.	<i>The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to the impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics, and the actions to address each threat (consistent with the Williamsburg Resolution and the BMP Guidance), including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>
EPR 54	The Parties are encouraged to report on issues relating to aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics in a full and timely fashion.	<i>The IP Guidelines, CNL(12)44, specify the timetable for submission of IPs and APRs. Reminders will be issued. There will be a need to monitor compliance with these timelines.</i>

EPR 57	It is recommended that further efforts be made to address the issue of <i>Gyrodactylus salaris</i> in the context of the NASCO 'Next Steps' process.	<i>The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to G. salaris and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>
EPR 58	Further exchange of information among the jurisdictions through the development of IPs and FARs, as appropriate, should be welcomed.	<i>The Council has agreed that the next cycle of IPs and APRs should commence in 2013 and that theme-based Special Sessions will be held on a range of topics. The first theme-based Special Session will be on mixed-stock fisheries.</i>
Compliance and Enforcement		
EPR 59	The 'Next Steps' process has been an effective mechanism to improve compliance and enforcement in NASCO, in large part due to the expanding and evolving role of the Council. The Organization is encouraged to continue these efforts to further improve compliance and enforcement and promote the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks.	<i>The IP template CNL(12)42, seeks details of the expected outcome, the approach for monitoring effectiveness and enforcement. Progress will be reported through the APRs for each specified action. The new reporting cycle has greater focus on enforcement than the first cycle. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>
EPR 61	The Parties are encouraged to continue to report on these matters in the next cycle of the 'Next Steps' process. Implementation plans should include reporting on estimates of unreported catches and measures taken to reduce such catches. Timely reporting is essential so that all relevant information is available during assessments.	<i>The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the current level of unreported catch and the measures being taken to reduce this. The APR template, CNL(12)43, seeks details of the estimated unreported catch from in-river, estuarine and coastal fisheries. A schedule for reporting has been agreed and reminders will be issued to the Parties. There will be a need to monitor compliance with these timelines, progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>
International Cooperation		
EPR 69	The NASCO website should show active NGOs, or explain why an NGO is referred to as 'suspended'.	<i>The website has been amended in accordance with this recommendation.</i>
EPR 73	Iceland should be encouraged to re-accede to the Convention.	<i>In accordance with this recommendation a letter was sent to the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 15 May 2012 inviting Iceland to re-accede to the Convention. The Council has agreed that the President and Secretary should keep Iceland informed of NASCO's work. The Parties are also encouraged to raise the issue bilaterally.</i>

EPR 74	Dialogue with St. Pierre and Miquelon should be increased in order to agree upon targets and a method for making decisions on their salmon fishery and also to improve data collection.	<i>A letter was sent to the French Secrétariat Général de la Mer by the President in 2010 encouraging France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) to accede to the Convention. Welcome improvements have been made to the sampling programme of the St Pierre and Miquelon salmon fishery including genetic analyses. In accordance with this recommendation and as agreed by the Council a follow-up letter will be sent by the President. The Parties are encouraged to raise the issue bilaterally.</i>
		<i>NASCO should continue to cooperate with EIFAAC and OSPAR on issues of common interest.</i>
‘Strategic Approach’		
NS1	While the five key issues relating to management of salmon fisheries remain valid, the Group recognised the need for further progress to address the additional actions highlighted by the FAR Review Group. The 2009 fisheries management guidelines should assist jurisdictions in making further progress in implementing NASCO’s agreements and with future reporting.	<i>The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to fisheries and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. These issues were collated by the Secretariat and sent to jurisdictions with the request to develop new IPs. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>
NS2	NASCO could provide a useful forum for exchange of information on how different jurisdictions are incorporating social and economic factors in managing their salmon resource. Proposals for a Special Session are being developed by a Sub-Group of the Socio-Economics Working Group. It would be valuable to consider not only case studies on how social and economic factors are included in decisions relating to each of the three focus areas but to have discussions on the value of NASCO’s social and economic guidelines and what NASCO’s future role on this topic might be.	<i>A Special Session on socio-economics is planned for 2014. The Council has agreed that this should include case studies, consideration of the usefulness of NASCO’s socio-economic guidelines and NASCO’s future work on this topic. The IP template, CNL(12)42, also seeks information relating to social and economic aspects and how these are incorporated in management decisions.</i>
NS4	NASCO’s Habitat Plan of Action is vague and most habitat issues are a matter for the jurisdictions. The 2010 habitat guidelines may assist jurisdictions in making further progress in implementing NASCO’s agreements and with future reporting.	<i>The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to habitat protection and restoration, and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. These issues were collated by the Secretariat and sent to jurisdictions with the request to develop new IPs. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>

NS5	The 2009 BMP Guidance on sea lice and containment may assist jurisdictions in making further progress in implementing NASCO's agreements and with future reporting but there might also be improved guidance on other aspects of reporting e.g. in relation to transgenic salmon. Key issue 7 ('Consider the consequences of aquaculture of Atlantic salmon in countries that are not parties to NASCO') may not be required if the Strategic Approach is revised in future.	<i>The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the main threats and management challenges relating to aquaculture and related activities, and the actions to address each threat, including actions on the specific issues identified in the first reporting cycle. These issues were collated by the Secretariat and sent to jurisdictions with the request to develop new IPs. The IP template seeks specific information on the policy/strategy in the case of transgenic salmon. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes. The EPR considered that the Strategic Approach had provided a comprehensive framework for the work of NASCO and it will be used in the next cycle of reporting.</i>
NS6	Given the risks posed by the spread of <i>G. salaris</i> , further exchange of information among the jurisdictions is important and future reporting under Implementation Plans may be the most appropriate way to facilitate this exchange. It was recognised that <i>G. salaris</i> is a specific issue that was highlighted in the Strategic Approach, but in the event that the Strategic Approach is revised in the future, the goal and key issue relating to <i>G. salaris</i> could be incorporated in Challenge 5 (Aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics).	<i>The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on measures in place to prevent the spread of G. salaris.</i> <i>The EPR considered that the Strategic Approach had provided a comprehensive framework for the work of NASCO and it will be used in the next cycle of reporting.</i>
Reporting and evaluation		
NS8	The second round of reporting under Implementation Plans should be streamlined so as to reduce the reporting burden, avoid duplication and focus the reports and reviews on information and analysis to further NASCO's objectives of conserving, restoring, enhancing and rationally managing salmon stocks in the North Atlantic. It would assist the streamlining of future reporting if templates were developed to facilitate the development of consistent plans and reports and the possibility of electronic reporting should be considered	<i>Templates for both IPs (CNL(12)42) and APRs (CNL(12)43) have been developed. The IP template has been made available electronically for completion.</i>
NS9	The second round of reporting under Implementation Plans should place greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of activities and describe clearly identifiable measurable outcomes and timescales.	<i>The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks details of 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 evaluated. An initial assessment will be undertaken to ensure such information is presented and where there are gaps the IPs will be returned to the jurisdiction for further drafting. They will then be evaluated by a Review Group. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>

NS10	In developing updated Implementation Plans it is envisaged that jurisdictions will use their existing plans as a starting point and involvement of NGOs and other stakeholders is encouraged.	<i>The IP Guidelines, CNL(12)44, state that IPs should draw on information contained in the first IPs and be prepared in consultation with other NGOs and other relevant stakeholders and industries. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>
NS11	The findings from the first round of reviews should be taken into account in developing updated Implementation Plans.	<i>The IP template, CNL(12)42, requests that jurisdictions take into account the specific issues on which action was recommended in the first cycle of reporting. These issues were collated by the Secretariat and sent to jurisdictions with the request to develop new IPs. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>
NS12	Updated Implementation Plans should be subjected to a critical review since these plans will set the stage for activities and reporting for a five year period. The Group recommends that any plan that is not sufficiently specific should be returned to the jurisdiction for further drafting	<i>The IP Guidelines, CNL(12)44, state that there will be an initial assessment of IPs and where IPs do not provide answers to all questions, list threats and provide actions to address threats they will be returned for further drafting. Similarly, after a full evaluation, IPs that are unsatisfactory will be returned for further drafting. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>
NS13	Each year the jurisdictions should provide a report identifying the status of actions within their plan as well as available data on monitoring the effectiveness of those actions. A review of the Annual Reports should be conducted to assess if the commitments in the plan have been fulfilled and whether progress has been made towards achievement of the stated objectives.	<i>A template for APRs, CNL(12)43, has been developed that seeks a progress report on each action, the results of monitoring and enforcement and whether the objective has been achieved. These APRs will be reviewed in order to ensure that jurisdictions have provided a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating the actions in their IPs (see CNL(12)44). There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.</i>
NS14	There should be a new cycle of Focus Area Reports but developed around specific themes e.g. during the year when habitat protection and restoration is considered the theme might be an exchange of information on fish passage issues. Reports may be solicited from jurisdictions and could be presented during the Special Session	<i>The Council has agreed that FARs will be replaced by theme-based Special Sessions and procedures have been agreed for planning and organising these sessions. Priority themes have been agreed (See CNL(12)12). The first theme-based Special Session will be on mixed-stock fisheries.</i>
Additional areas to be addressed in meeting NASCO's challenges		
NS15	Climate change poses real challenges for salmon management that may require management approaches to be more flexible and adaptive to changes that may be difficult to predict. The Council might, in the first instance, consider holding a Special Session on this topic in the future to allow for information exchange	<i>The Council has agreed that theme-based Special Sessions could be helpful to NASCO and procedures for planning and organising these Special Sessions agreed (see CNL(12)12 for details). A number of priority topics have been identified including management of mixed-stock fisheries (MSFs), managing salmon under a changing climate and fish passage at hydro-electric facilities. It has been agreed that there will be a Special Session on socio-economics at the 2014 Annual Meeting and a focus on MSFs in NEAC in 2013. Information on climate change</i>

		<i>impacts on salmon was presented at the ‘Salmon Summit’ and should be taken into account in developing future research needs. ICES has been requested to report on any significant advances in understanding of the biology of Atlantic salmon that is pertinent to NASCO, including information on the potential implications of climate change for salmon management.</i>
NS16	The President and Secretary should engage in discussions with the former Head of Delegation for Iceland to keep him informed of the work of NASCO	<i>A letter was sent to the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 15 May 2012 inviting Iceland to re-accede to the Convention. Efforts will continue to be made to keep Iceland informed of NASCO’s work (see EPR 73).</i>

Section 2: Recommendations of the External Performance Review Panel (EPR) and ‘Next Steps’ Review Group (NS) that require further action for their implementation

IUU Fishing by non-NASCO Parties	
EPR 6	If IUU fishing by vessels registered to non-Parties becomes an issue in the future, NASCO should consider taking measures consistent with the Port State Measures Agreement.
EPR 7	Any strategy would have to take account of the existing NEAFC port control system and EU Regulation 1005/2008.
EPR 8	The need for measures or a mechanism to combat IUU fishing in the NASCO area of application should be monitored and as appropriate developed, including through cooperation with relevant RFMOs which already have in place MCS systems, in which case the IPOA-IUU should serve as a basis for such measures or mechanism.
EPR 63	NASCO should consider enhancing its current surveillance efforts by requesting the cooperation of NEAFC and NAFO in reporting on any suspected IUU fishing activities for salmon in the area of the Convention that may be detected in their MCS operations.
EPR 64	If IUU fishing activities for salmon in the area of the Convention are discovered, the Organization should take appropriate and proportionate measures to address the problem, including strengthening the NASCO surveillance programme, as appropriate.
EPR 72	If IUU fishing is detected in the future, NASCO should consider whether relationships could be forged with non-Parties to address the issue. Other areas of its mandate could also be the subject of such discussions, such as enhancement and restoration. A strategy could be considered involving action in accordance with international law to address and deter the undermining of the objective of the Convention.
Decision: <i>A problem of fishing for salmon by vessels registered to non-NASCO Parties occurred in the North-East Atlantic in the late 1980s and early 1990s. NASCO took diplomatic action to address the problem and there have been no sightings of vessels registered to non-NASCO Parties fishing for salmon in international waters in the North-East Atlantic since the early 1990s. However, it is recognised that airborne surveillance of this area is limited, particularly during winter months. The Secretariat</i>	

<p><i>should continue to liaise with the Parties and the coastguard authorities. It should also seek cooperation from NEAFC and NAFO to use their MCS to identify any activity by vessels in their areas of competence that may be fishing for salmon in international waters and to compile information in accordance with the Council's Resolution on Fishing for Salmon on the High Seas, CNL(92)54. The Parties should coordinate with their delegations to NAFO and NEAFC, as appropriate, on this issue. In the event that there is evidence of such activity, it will be drawn to the Council's attention so that appropriate measures can be considered.</i></p>	
<p>IUU Fishing – NASCO Parties</p>	
EPR 60	<p>Despite progress in addressing illegal and unreported fishing within areas of fisheries jurisdiction, high levels continue to be reported. Further efforts are encouraged to address this issue, including through enhanced reporting procedures and logbook schemes.</p>
EPR 62	<p>Since difficulties in minimising and estimating unreported catches remain a common challenge for the Parties, consideration should be given to convening a technical meeting to exchange information and best practices on the methods used to calculate unreported catches. It would also be useful, given the range of approaches by the Parties to addressing illegal and unreported catches, to consider the development of best practices and consolidated guidelines.</p>
<p>Decision: <i>In response to requests from NASCO, ICES has advised that over recent years efforts have been made to reduce the level of unreported catch in a number of countries through improved reporting procedures, carcass tagging and logbook schemes. Consistent with the 1993 Minimum Standard for Catch Statistics, CNL(93)51, jurisdictions should continue to take measures to reduce the level of unreported catches. The IP template, CNL(12)42, seeks information on the current level of unreported catch and the measures being taken to reduce this. The APR template, CNL(12)43, seeks details of the estimated unreported catch from in-river, estuarine and coastal fisheries. There will be a need to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes. A Special Session was held on this topic in 2007 to review approaches to estimating and minimise such catches. The need for the development of guidelines on approaches to minimising unreported catches and for a Special Session on this topic could be considered in the light of the information provided in the next reporting cycle. ICES has reviewed the methods used to calculate unreported catches and has provided suggestions for how estimates of unreported catch should be included in regional, national and international assessments. Best practice guidelines have not, however, been developed by the Council and in the first instance, the Secretariat should review FAO's IUU IPOA with regard to any guidance the IPOA may include on best practice in minimising unreported catches and report back to the Council.</i></p>	
<p>Ecosystem Approach</p>	
EPR 9	<p>Review the Technical Guidelines on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries with a view to determining whether EAF management plans are needed.</p>
<p>Decision: <i>ICES has advised that the current salmon fisheries in both the NEAC and NAC areas probably have no or only minor influence on the marine ecosystem. Furthermore, the Plan of Action for Habitat Protection and Restoration requires that each jurisdiction should prepare a comprehensive salmon habitat protection and restoration plan in order to identify risks to productive capacity. Progress in this regard is being assessed through IPs and APRs. Given that the issue of EAF is broad, the Secretariat should review these Technical Guidelines and report to the Council on any implications for NASCO.</i></p>	
<p>Rivers database</p>	
EPR 40	<p>The information in the rivers database should be compared with other information on the state of the river systems, for example, the annual ICES advice and the information on habitat estimates.</p>

NS7	The stock categories used in the NASCO rivers database are out-dated and consideration should be given to reviewing these in the future. Consideration might be given to including the goals and key issues relating to initiatives for endangered salmon populations under the other challenges if the Strategic Approach is revised in the future.
Decision: <i>All jurisdictions have contributed to the database and the information is available on the NASCO website. This information has already been used in research projects and is a valuable PR tool. The Council will convene a Working Group, to work by correspondence or at the Annual Meeting, to develop recommendations for revisions to the stock categories that are used in the database that better reflect status of stocks relative to attainment of conservation limits. The Parties would then be requested to update the stock category information held in the database and provide information on threats to those stocks. With the available information, the NASCO Secretariat should be requested to prepare an overview of the status of stocks around the North Atlantic and the threats to them using the information contained in the rivers database. The EPR considered that the Strategic Approach had provided a comprehensive framework for the work of NASCO and it will be used in the next cycle of reporting.</i>	
ICES Advice	
EPR 44	WGNAS should heed the advice given by the ICES Review Group, especially to estimate post-smolt survival.
EPR 45	The issues and recommendations raised by WGNAS in 2011 should be addressed when it meets in 2012.
Decision: <i>EPR 44 relates to an issue concerning the forecasts of stock abundance and the EPR has noted that in 2011 the ICES Review Group recommended that environmental indices should be included in the model used by the ICES WGNAS. This matter should be considered by NASCO's SSC to determine if a request should be made to ICES in relation to this issue. For EPR45, it is assumed that the ICES WGNAS will have acted on the issues and recommendations it raised in 2011.</i>	
Research on Salmon at Sea (including bycatch)	
EPR 10	Review the International Guidelines on By-catch Management and Reduction of Discards with a view to developing a strategy to promote the application of by-catch measures in NASCO, including through all of its Commissions.
EPR 55	Sea mortality should be further investigated in relation to all phases from the time the salmon leaves natal waters.
EPR 56	Observer programs on and screening of landings of pelagic vessels fishing in seasons and areas where salmon make feeding migrations should be continued.
NS3	The key issues in the Strategic Approach relating to research on salmon at sea have been implemented and the SALSEA Programme has been a highly successful public/private initiative that allowed important research on salmon at sea to be conducted. The research inventory relating to mortality of salmon at sea that is maintained by the IASRB is a very useful initiative and the Board might consider if NASCO might play a broader role in providing a forum for coordination of research of relevance to NASCO's work.
Decision: <i>The annual request to ICES seeks information on bycatch in new and existing fisheries. ICES has advised that the current salmon fisheries in both the NEAC and NAC areas probably have no or only minor influence on the marine ecosystem. For the WGC area ICES has indicated that there is no information on by-catch of other species in the salmon fishery that is practiced with nearshore surface gillnets. This fishery has been restricted to an internal-use fishery (~20 tonnes) since 1998 by NASCO agreements. The need for a by-catch strategy in NASCO might be considered if the ICES advice on this issue changed. If that was the case, the Secretariat could be requested to prepare a review of the International Guidelines on Bycatch/Discards. NASCO's Guidelines for the Management of Salmon Fisheries, CNL(09)43, indicate that information should be sought on the by-catch of salmon in fisheries for other species and efforts made to identify their river of origin. Such information should be</i>	

reported to NASCO. Concern was raised about bycatch of salmon in pelagic fisheries (e.g. for herring and mackerel) in the NEAC area. In the light of the new information and tools developed through the SALSEA Programme, the Council recommends that jurisdictions undertake further studies to assess by-catch in pelagic fisheries such as those recently undertaken by Russia, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. Further liaison with the pelagic RAC is also encouraged. The Secretariat might also liaise with NAFO and NEAFC regarding availability of information on by-catch of salmon obtained through their observer programmes. The Board's role is to promote collaboration and cooperation on research into the causes of mortality of salmon at sea and the opportunities to counteract it. It has agreed to review its working methods in 2013; its TORs require that it maintain an inventory of research relating to mortality of salmon at sea. This includes information on long-term monitoring programmes in freshwater. It will be a matter for the Council to decide if it wishes to have a broader inventory of research relating to other aspects of NASCO's work. The Parties considered that theme-based Special Sessions might allow for a further exchange on research priorities and needs. A Sub-Group of the SAG has met and provided recommendations to the IASRB for future research for consideration during the 2013 Annual Meeting.

Public relations

EPR 68	The Council should consider whether it wishes to hold further stakeholder dialogue meetings in the jurisdictions of all relevant Members, <i>inter alia</i> , to report on developments, to consider or monitor the IPs and FARs and to discuss the implementation of the recommendations in the present report.
EPR 70	NASCO should take further steps to consider, develop and implement a clear public relations strategy, <i>inter alia</i> , through a revitalization and strengthening of the Public Relations Group, continued regularized cooperation with the NGOs expert in media relations and the Parties communications experts.
EPR 71	The Public Relations Group could build on the work already begun and develop a medium-term proactive communications strategy that sets out objectives, tasks and the responsibilities of NASCO and its partners. Some components of such a strategy should include the "State of the Salmon" report, progress made under IPs and FARs, development of additional reports on NASCO's achievements, educational tools and further development of the "newsroom" site.

Decision: *The IPs and APRs in the second cycle of reporting will be made available on the NASCO website. NASCO has 35 accredited NGOs which now participate in most of the meetings and improvements have been made to the website. Stakeholder consultation meetings are a tool to be considered when a specific need for seeking broad input is identified. The Council has agreed that its initial priorities in Public Relations are its websites and the Salmon Rivers database. The work to enhance the website is on-going and should continue. The Council believes that NASCO should be the source of information on salmon stock status around the North Atlantic and has agreed to develop a State of the Salmon report using the updated stock categories in the rivers database (see above). The Council should keep its PR approach under review and consider if further actions are needed.*

Future role for NASCO on aquaculture

NS17	The Council should resolve the future role envisaged for NASCO on aquaculture, taking into account the findings of the external performance review
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Decision: *Aquaculture remains a focus area for NASCO in terms of concerns over impacts on wild Atlantic salmon. In general, NASCO has established the goal to minimise adverse impacts to wild stocks from aquaculture activities. However, it is for the Parties and jurisdictions to identify and implement appropriate measures to meet this goal. Progress will be tracked as implementation plans and annual reports are submitted. Some more specific measures are contained in the NAC Protocols, appended to the Williamsburg Resolution.*

Meeting schedule and structure	
NS18	Options for changes to the structure, frequency and location of NASCO's Annual Meetings to achieve efficiency gains is a complex matter and there would be a need to consider the costs and benefits of different meeting options and changes to the agenda taking into account the findings of the external performance review
<p>Decision: <i>The Parties are invited to submit proposals for changes to the structure, frequency and location of NASCO meetings to the Secretariat who will prepare a paper, based on these submissions, for consideration by the Council at its 2013 Annual Meeting. The intention is to explore options for changes to the structure, frequency and location of NASCO meetings with a view to ensuring the most effective use of the time available and expertise present. The Parties may choose to communicate with each other during the development of these papers and Canada committed to circulate its draft to the other Parties.</i></p>	

Section 3: Strengthening the work of NASCO

Following a comprehensive discussion among the Parties in relation to the options for strengthening the work of NASCO (see FVN(13)12) it was agreed that in addition to the actions in sections 1 and 2, the priority area for special focus is in the area of fisheries management.

The Parties renewed their commitment to the following actions:

1. During the 2013 Council meeting, critically review the new 5-year Implementation Plans which include the following sections:
 - (a) information on reference points used to assess the status of stocks;
 - (b) the decision-making process for fisheries management, including predetermined decisions taken under different stock conditions (e.g. the stock level at which fisheries are closed);
 - (c) identification of whether fisheries are permitted to operate on salmon stocks that are below their reference point and, if so, how many fisheries there are and what approach is taken to managing them that still promotes stock rebuilding; and
 - (d) identification of any mixed-stock salmon fisheries and an explanation of how they are managed to ensure that all the contributing stocks are meeting their conservation objectives.
2. During each annual Council meeting, critically review the annual progress reports from each Party, paying particular attention to progress against actions relating to the management of salmon fisheries.
3. Ensure there are agenda items in each of the Commissions to allow for a focus on mixed-stock fisheries.
4. Focus the first Council new theme-based Special Session on mixed-stock fisheries.

In addition, the Parties agreed to explore opportunities to strengthen their commitment to implement the NASCO Guidelines on Management of Salmon Fisheries *inter alia* by the use of a Protocol or Resolution.