

Agenda item 6.1(b)
For decision

Council

CNL(08)13

***Report of the Fisheries Management Focus Area Review
Group – Issues and Questions for the Parties***

CNL(08)13

Report of the Fisheries Management Focus Area Review Group – Issues and Questions for the Parties

1. The Council has agreed that each Party or Jurisdiction should prepare a Fisheries Management Focus Area Report to provide a more in-depth assessment of:
 - the measures already in place that address the NASCO Agreements relating to fisheries management;
 - further actions proposed within their Implementation Plans to meet those Agreements;
 - progress with implementing these actions.
2. The focus area reports are intended to provide the basis for evaluating the extent to which the fisheries management approach is meeting, or expected to meet, NASCO's goals to promote the diversity and abundance of salmon stocks and maintain all stocks above their conservation limits. To undertake this evaluation the Council established an *Ad Hoc* Review Group comprising Hugh-Campbell-Adamson and Sue Scott from the NGOs and Torsteen Overgaard, Ted Potter, Oyvind Walso and Tim Young from NASCO Parties. I served as Coordinator and the Secretariat facilitated the Group's work and provided the Rapporteur but we were not reviewers. The Group met in Toronto, Canada, during 29 April – 2 May and its report is attached.
3. The Group's functions agreed by the Council were as follows:
 - a. The *Ad Hoc* Review Group shall review and analyze the Fisheries Management Focus Area Reports prepared by the Parties or Jurisdictions.
 - b. In carrying out this task, the *Ad Hoc* Review Group should seek to assess the extent to which the information provided in the Fisheries Management Focus Area Reports indicates that NASCO's goals are being, or will be, achieved.
 - c. The *Ad Hoc* Review Group will meet in May 2008 to review the Fisheries Management Focus Area Reports submitted for the Special Session, and collaborate to highlight issues to be raised during the 2008 Special Session and to provide any questions to the Parties or Jurisdictions by 15 May, 2008.
 - d. Following discussions in the Special Session on Fisheries Management, the *Ad Hoc* Review Group should prepare a short report to be submitted to the President in the course of the 2008 Annual Meeting, suggesting additional actions to ensure the consistency of fisheries management efforts with NASCO Agreements.
4. The Group has completed the first part of its work (functions a, b and c above) and the issues and questions it has developed are in Annex 4 of the attached report. These have been sent to the Parties and jurisdictions who have been asked to respond in their presentations at the Special Session focusing specifically on:

- how reference points (conservation limits and/or management targets) or alternative measures are used to define adequate abundance of the stock;
 - the management actions that will be employed to control harvest, including measures that will be used to address any failure or trend in abundance or diversity.
5. The Group believes that because of the limited time available at the Annual Meeting it cannot, within the 48 hours available, consider the information presented (including the clarification it has sought) and develop a fair and balanced assessment of the additional actions to ensure the consistency of fisheries management efforts with NASCO Agreements (function (d) above). It is proposing to the Council, therefore, that the Parties send their responses to the Group's questions in writing to the Secretariat (or alternatively or additionally amend their focus area report to address the questions) by 31 July. Thereafter, the Group would complete function (d) with a view to providing a report to the President by 31 October 2008.
 6. The Council is asked to consider the Group's report and decide on appropriate action.

Secretary
Edinburgh
12 May 2008

IP(08)15

***Report of the Meeting of the
Ad Hoc Review Group on Fisheries Management
Focus Area Reports
Toronto, Canada
29 April - 2 May 2008***

IP(08)15

***Report of the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Review Group on Fisheries Management
Focus Area Reports
Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto, Canada
29 April - 2 May 2008***

1. Opening of the Meeting by the Coordinator

1.1 The Coordinator, Dr Malcolm Windsor, opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the Group to Toronto. He referred to the work of the first *Ad Hoc* Review Group and noted that there were some lessons learned by that first Group that might assist with the assessment of the focus area reports. The first Group had undertaken a review of the structure and content of the Implementation Plans to ensure they were consistent with the Council's guidelines for developing these plans. Now, the task is to look at the adequacy of the measures concerning management of salmon fisheries in relation to NASCO's objectives of promoting the diversity and abundance of salmon stocks and maintaining all stocks above their conservation limit. He noted that the management of salmon fisheries is a central area in that is the clear responsibility of NASCO's Parties and is often the main tool used to rebuild stocks. The process of reviewing focus area reports in a transparent and inclusive manner is a vital element of the 'Next Steps' process. He stressed that the members of the Group from the Parties are representing the Organization and specifically not their Parties. The NGO representatives represent the international NGO community in NASCO. The Coordinator's role was to chair the meeting and facilitate the Group's work; he would not be one of the reviewers, nor would the Assistant Secretary who would also facilitate the Group's work and serve as Rapporteur. He also stressed that it was not necessary for the Group to reach unanimous agreement on its assessments although this would strengthen its report.

1.2 A list of participants is contained in Annex 1.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

2.1 The Group adopted its agenda, IP(08)14 (Annex 2).

3. Review of Terms of Reference and consideration of Working Methods

3.1 The functions of the Group as adopted by the Council, CNL(07)47, are as follows:

- (a) the *Ad Hoc* Review Group shall review and analyze the Fisheries Management Focus Area Reports prepared by the Parties or Jurisdictions;
- (b) in carrying out this task, the *Ad Hoc* Review Group should seek to assess the extent to which the information provided in the Fisheries Management Focus Area Reports indicates that NASCO's goals are being, or will be, achieved;

- (c) The *Ad Hoc* Review Group will meet in May 2008 to review the Fisheries Management Focus Area Reports submitted for the Special Session, and collaborate to highlight issues to be raised during the 2008 Special Session and to provide any questions to the Parties or Jurisdictions by 15 May, 2008;
 - (d) following discussions in the Special Session on Fisheries Management, the *Ad Hoc* Review Group should prepare a short report to be submitted to the President in the course of the 2008 Annual Meeting, suggesting additional actions to ensure the consistency of fisheries management efforts with NASCO Agreements.
- 3.2 The Group discussed its working methods. Prior to the meeting a listing of the ten elements to be included in the focus area reports had been agreed by correspondence, CNL40.517 (Annex 3). This list was based on the elements specified by the Council (CNL(07)47) but included some notes of clarification, developed by the Group, to assist the Parties in developing their focus area reports. This same list was used by the Group to develop a format for use in reviewing the focus area reports and to identify areas where further clarification was required. An initial reviewer was assigned to each plan from among the NASCO representatives and the NGOs also undertook initial reviews of all the plans. These initial reviews from the NASCO representatives and the NGOs formed the basis for deliberations by the whole Group and the development of the issues to be raised and questions for the Parties and relevant jurisdictions.
- 3.3 The Council had requested that the Group assess whether the information provided in the focus area reports indicated that NASCO's goals are being or will be achieved. NASCO's objectives for the management of salmon fisheries are to promote the abundance and diversity of salmon stocks and maintain all stocks above their conservation limit. The Group concluded that it could only undertake this assessment once it had received the clarification sought from the Parties and relevant jurisdictions to the issues and questions raised.
- 3.4 The Group agreed on a number of 'ground rules', based on those used by the first *Ad Hoc* Group to guide its work in undertaking the reviews. These were as follows:
- (a) The initial reviewers were asked to lead the discussion within the Group and to produce an initial list of issues and questions to the Parties to take into account any views from the Group;
 - (b) The initial reviewers would remain anonymous in the report and in the event that one or more members of the Group did not agree with a particular aspect or aspects of the review then the report would indicate that there were dissenting views but not disclose which members of the Group expressed the dissenting views unless they wished to be identified;
 - (c) The Group would base its reviews only on the information presented in the focus area reports and the final Implementation Plans;

- (d) Because not all jurisdictions were represented on the Group, it was agreed that the NASCO representative on the Group from a country whose focus area report was being reviewed would not be present during the review of that report;
- (e) While the Group recognized that the extent of the salmon stocks and the resources available to manage them varies markedly between jurisdictions, the Group took no account of these differences in undertaking its reviews;
- (f) The Group recognized that in some jurisdictions the responsibility for management of salmon stocks rests with the riparian owners while in others the resource is managed by the public sector. The Group felt that, nonetheless, governments have or should have powers to conserve the resource and it should therefore be possible to summarise in the focus area report the management actions that are expected to be taken by the appropriate bodies in the coming years. Such differences were not, therefore, taken into account in reviewing the reports;
- (g) Following the completion of the reviews all the issues and questions for each Party and jurisdiction were then re-examined to ensure consistency.

3.5 The Group noted that under its functions it is requested to highlight issues to be raised during the 2008 Special Session and to provide any questions to the Parties or Jurisdictions by 15 May, 2008. In the course of the 2008 Annual Meeting, the Group is asked to prepare a short report to be submitted to the President suggesting additional actions to ensure the consistency of fisheries management efforts with NASCO Agreements. Because of the lack of time available during the Annual Meeting, other commitments during the Annual Meeting of the members of the Group and the Secretariat, and because of the importance that the task be carried out in a thorough, fair and balanced manner, the Group recommends to the Council that its report to the President be developed inter-sessionally and made available no later than 30 October. In this way, the Group believes it will be able to give adequate care and consideration to the actions that it may propose to the Parties and relevant jurisdictions to ensure consistency of fisheries management efforts with NASCO Agreements.

3.6 The Group reviewed the elements in document CNL40.517 and noted some general comments that related to many of the focus area reports. These comments are as follows:

- Item 1 requests a brief description of the fisheries including an overview of the stocks exploited, the gear types used, the location of the fishery and its magnitude, and current management measures and those planned. The information provided varied markedly and many reports did not provide a clear overview of the fisheries. The Group felt that it was valuable for the reports to include listing of salmon rivers with catches, conservation limits etc. and maps showing the location of rivers and management areas (see paragraph 5.3 below);
- NASCO's objective for the management of salmon fisheries is to promote the diversity and abundance of salmon stocks. Item 4 requests information on diversity criteria and item 7c on the selectivity of the fisheries. Little linkage has been made between these two items in the reports;

- item 8 requests information on the expected effects of management measures and the timescale in which the measures would be expected to have these effects, but in most plans little information has been provided;
- item 9 requests an explanation of how socio-economic factors are applied in development of fisheries management actions. NASCO's Agreement on the Adoption of a Precautionary Approach states that management measures, taking account of uncertainty, should be aimed at maintaining all salmon stocks in the NASCO Convention area above their conservation limit taking into account the best available information, and socio-economic factors. In many cases the focus area reports noted economic benefits associated with the fisheries but few reports indicated how social and economic data are incorporated into decisions concerning management of the fisheries;
- item 10 requests details of the programmes that would be used to monitor the effects of management measures. The Precautionary Approach requires assessment of the effectiveness of management actions in all salmon fisheries. In most reports information is provided on the monitoring programmes to assess status of stocks but not those specifically designed to assess the effectiveness of the management measures taken.

3.7 These aspects will need to be addressed more thoroughly the next time the focus area is management of fisheries and further clarification of the information sought might be developed to assist the Parties and relevant jurisdictions. The Group recommends that the Council should again focus on the management of salmon fisheries in about three years time i.e. in 2011, after there have been focus area reports on habitat protection and restoration and aquaculture and related issues. This would allow progress with implementing the fisheries management measures in the Implementation Plans to be assessed but until 2011 the Group believes that there is little need for further reporting on the measures implemented.

4. Review of Focus Area Reports in relation to achieving NASCO goals

4.1 The Group is concerned that many of the focus area reports had been received well after the Council's deadline of 31 March 2008. This had meant that it had had very limited time to conduct some of the reviews and for the NGOs to consult the Organizations in the countries concerned. It was recognised that this was, in part, related to the fact that the final Implementation Plans were only due for submission by 11 February. The Group recommends that for future focus area reports an earlier deadline should be adopted, so that the *Ad Hoc* Review Groups have more time in which to undertake their important work. The Group recommends to the Council that future focus area reports be requested from the Parties no later than 31 December so that subsequent *Ad Hoc* review Groups could meet in the first quarter to carry out its review.

4.2 No focus area reports were available for six jurisdictions – Faroe Islands, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal and Sweden. Two of these jurisdictions (Spain and Portugal) have not developed Implementation Plans either. The development of Implementation Plans and subsequent reporting on progress through focus area reports is an essential part of the 'Next Steps' process. The focus area reports provide a measure of just how jurisdictions are progressing in implementing their plans and

consequently in achieving NASCO's objectives. The lack of focus area reports is a serious concern as there is no knowledge of whether NASCO's objectives are being met. The Group therefore recommends that the Council strongly urges those jurisdictions that have not yet submitted a report to do so at the earliest opportunity so that they can be reviewed by the Group before it completes its work.

4.3 The Group reviewed twelve focus area reports as follows:

- Canada, IP(08)9;
- Denmark (in respect of Greenland), IP(08)7;
- EU - Denmark, IP(08)12;
- EU - Finland, IP(08)3;
- EU - Ireland, IP(08)13;
- EU - UK (England and Wales) , IP(08)5;
- EU - UK (Northern Ireland) , IP(08)4;
- EU - UK (Scotland) , IP(08)2;
- Iceland, IP(08)10;
- Norway, IP(08)11;
- Russian Federation, IP(08)8;
- USA, IP(08)6.

4.4 The Group has not commented on the quality of the report itself in terms of format and clarity but only on the content and its consistency with NASCO's agreements. There was great variation in the length and clarity of the reports. Most reports had followed the format given in CNL40.517 (Annex 3) and this had facilitated the Group's assessments of the reports.

5. Consideration of issues to be raised and questions for Parties/jurisdictions

5.1 The Group has unanimously agreed issues and questions that it wishes to raise with the Parties and relevant jurisdictions for clarification but recognises that there is very limited time before the Annual Meeting for a response. It therefore proposes to the Council that the Parties and jurisdictions respond to these issues and questions in their presentations at the Special Session focusing, in particular, on:

- any issues or questions concerning the status of stocks relative to the abundance criteria specified (item 3); and
- the management measures taken to control harvest (item 6).

5.2 Following the Special Session the Group recommends to the Council that the Parties and jurisdictions be asked to provide their responses to the issues raised and questions to the Coordinator in writing by 31 July. The Group does not believe that there is a need to revise the focus area reports unless a Party or jurisdiction wishes to do so. Once the Group has the responses it will be able to proceed to the final phase of its remit and suggest additional actions to ensure the consistency of fisheries management efforts with NASCO Agreements.

5.3 There were some general aspects that the Group felt might be taken into account in developing future focus area reports on management of salmon fisheries:

- inclusion of tables listing all salmon rivers and fisheries with a brief summary of their nature and size e.g. wetted area, catches, conservation limits;
- inclusion of maps showing the major salmon rivers and management areas would provide some orientation and greater context to the descriptions in the text;
- provision of full accounts of how conservation limits or other measures of stock status are developed and applied;
- inclusion of flow diagrams of the decision-making process;
- clear cross-referencing of measures detailed in the focus area reports to the actions included in the Implementation Plan.

5.4 The issues and questions developed by the Group are contained in Annex 4.

6. Arrangements for Special Session during the Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting

6.1 The Group noted that it will be important to clarify the arrangements for the Special Session before the Annual Meeting so that the Parties and relevant jurisdictions are made aware of what is expected from them in their presentations. It is anticipated that the Group will present its report describing the process it has followed and the issues/questions it has developed. The Parties would then have the opportunity to present their focus area reports and address the issues/questions from the Group although it is proposed that the focus at the Special Session be on addressing any issues or questions concerning the status of stocks relative to the abundance criteria specified (item 3) and the management measures taken to control harvest (item 6). The Group noted that with sixteen implementation plans, although only twelve focus area reports, the time available for each presentation would be limited to no more than ten minutes per Party or jurisdiction and that a fuller response to the issues/questions should be made in writing after the Annual Meeting. With regard to the Group's presentation it was agreed that after a brief introduction from the Coordinator there might be a description of how the Group conducted its work and then an overview of lessons learned for the work of future *Ad Hoc* Review Groups and what the fisheries management Review Group will be doing to complete its work. The Group agreed to develop its presentation and allocation of duties by correspondence.

7. Arrangements for the Future Work of the Group

7.1 The Group decided that it would resolve its future working arrangements in the light of the responses it received at and after the Annual Meeting. The final task is to suggest additional actions to ensure the consistency of fisheries management efforts with NASCO Agreements. This may require a further meeting of the Group

8. Report of the Meeting

8.1 The Group agreed a report of its meeting.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 There was no other business.

10. Close of Meeting

- 10.1 The Coordinator thanked all the members of the Group for their cooperative spirit and their valuable work in what was a vital element in the 'Next Steps' for NASCO process.

List of Participants

Mr Hugh Campbell-Adamson, Association of Salmon Fishery Boards, Scotland

Dr Peter Hutchinson, NASCO Secretariat

Mr Ted Potter, CEFAS, UK

Mr Torsteen Overgaard, Greenland Home Rule, Greenland

Ms Sue Scott, Atlantic Salmon Federation, Canada

Mr Oyvind Walso, Directorate for Nature Management, Trondheim, Norway

Mr Tim Young, Fisheries and Oceans, Canada

Dr Malcolm Windsor, NASCO Secretariat (Review Group Coordinator)

IP(08)14

Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting by the Coordinator
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Review of Terms of Reference and consideration of working methods
4. Review of Focus Area Reports in relation to achieving NASCO's goals
5. Consideration of issues to be raised and questions for Parties/jurisdictions
6. Arrangements for Special Session during the Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting
7. Arrangements for the Future Work of the Group
8. Report of the Meeting
9. Any Other Business
10. Close of Meeting

CNL40.517

Preparation of Focus Area Reports on Management of Salmon Fisheries

The Council has asked each Party or jurisdiction to prepare a fisheries management focus area report to provide a more in-depth assessment of:

- the measures already in place that address the NASCO agreements relating to fisheries management;
- further actions proposed within their Implementation Plans to meet these agreements;
- progress with implementing these actions.

Background information on the NASCO Agreements relating to fisheries management is provided in Appendix 1. The Council has decided that the elements listed in paragraphs 1 to 10 below be included in the Focus Area Reports (see CNL(07)47)). The *Ad Hoc* Review Group has reviewed this list and has provided some additional notes of clarification, shown in italics below.

- 1. A brief description of the fisheries, including an overview of the stocks exploited, gear types, fishery location, magnitude of the fishery, current management restrictions and others planned.**

Note on 1: Sufficient information is required to explain the full nature of the fisheries being managed, the management systems in place (including the control and reporting systems) and any planned actions to review or modify these. It should not be necessary to break this down to a highly detailed level. Some of this information could be provided in tabular form.

- 2. Identification of exploited stocks and the reference points (conservation limit and/or management target) or alternative measures used to define adequate abundance of the stock.**

- 3. The status of the stock relative to the abundance criteria specified.**

Note on 2 and 3: The use of reference points or alternative measures is a key element of the NASCO Agreements on managing fisheries. Information is therefore required on the methods being used or proposed, their state of development or implementation, and any planned actions to further develop or modify these. Information on specific reference points and the current status of stocks could be provided in tabular form.

- 4. The extent to which the stock is meeting other diversity criteria (e.g. age groups, size groups, populations), if such information is available.**

Note on 4: It would be useful to provide a general description of those diversity criteria that have been evaluated, their current status and any proposed actions to extend or modify the

evaluation of stock diversity. (The way that this information is used in making management decisions is considered below).

5. For mixed stock fisheries, the information in numbers 3 and 4 above should be presented for each contributing stock.

Note on 5: It has been noted that mixed stock fisheries may create particular problems for fisheries management and the report should therefore describe those mixed stock fisheries that still operate within the jurisdiction, the overall management approach to these fisheries and future actions that are planned. It should be made clear what criteria are used to define mixed stock fisheries.

6. The management actions that will be employed to control harvest, including measures that will be used to address any failure or trend in abundance or diversity.

Note on 6: The Review Group will need sufficient information to be able to evaluate the powers for regulating fishing activity and/or harvest that are available or planned within the jurisdiction, any additional measures that may be used to protect and restore stocks, and any further actions that are planned (including measures to further reduce unreported catches).

7. The extent to which the following issues are taken into account:

- a. uncertainty in the assessments;**
- b. abundance of the stock/diversity of the stock;**
- c. selectivity of the fisheries;**
- d. any non-fishery factors affecting the stock;**
- e. other fisheries exploiting the stock.**

8. The expected extent and timescale of effects.

9. An explanation of how socio-economic factors are applied in the development of fisheries management actions and how this affects the attainment of NASCO's goals.

Note on 7, 8 and 9: These are key elements within the NASCO Decision Structure, so the report will need to explain how they are, or will be, taken into account in the management process within the jurisdiction and any actions that are planned for the future. Under element 8, information is requested on the expected effects of the management actions identified in element 6.

10. Programs that will be used to monitor the effect of the management measures and identify information deficiencies and timeframe for resolution.

Note on 10: The NASCO Agreement on the Precautionary Approach calls for the assessment of the effectiveness of management actions in all salmon fisheries. The report should therefore provide an overview of how this is or will be achieved.

Background on the Preparation of Focus Area Reports on Management of Salmon Fisheries

The Guidelines for the Preparation of NASCO's 'Implementation Plans' and for Reporting on Progress, NSTF(06)10, adopted by the Council, indicate that reports to Special Sessions will provide an in-depth assessment of actions taken under the focus areas identified. The Council has agreed that the first focus area reports should be on the management of salmon fisheries. The Guidelines further state that these focus area reports provide the basis for review of management actions taken to meet the objectives of the Implementation Plan and assessment of the efficacy of these actions in addressing the overall objectives of NASCO, in particular the conservation and restoration of salmon stocks.

At NASCO's Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting the Council reviewed document CNL(07)47 which provided guidance on the first focus area reports on management of salmon fisheries and which detailed the arrangements for the review. An *Ad Hoc* Review Group has now been appointed. To assist the Parties and jurisdictions in preparing their first focus area reports this document details how this group intends to conduct its review. It draws on document CNL(07)47 and aims first to summarise the main elements in the various documents developed by NASCO in relation to management of salmon fisheries and then details the issues that the *Ad Hoc* Group would wish to see addressed in the focus area reports.

NASCO has three agreements related to the management of salmon fisheries. These are:

- The Agreement on the Adoption of a Precautionary Approach, CNL(98)46;
- The Decision Structure to Aid the Council and Commissions of NASCO and the relevant authorities in Implementing the Precautionary Approach to Management of North Atlantic Salmon Fisheries, CNL31.332;
- The Minimum Standard for Catch Statistics, CNL(93)51.

Agreement on the Adoption of a Precautionary Approach

This Agreement states that an objective for the management of salmon fisheries for NASCO and its Parties is to promote the diversity and abundance of salmon stocks. It further states that, for this purpose, management measures, taking account of uncertainty, should be aimed at maintaining all stocks above their conservation limit taking into account the best available information, socio-economic factors and other factors identified in Article 9 of the Convention. The Agreement indicates that application of the Precautionary Approach to salmon fishery management is an integrated process that requires at least the following:

- that stocks be maintained above their conservation limits by the use of management targets;
- that conservation limits and management targets be set for each river and combined as appropriate for the management of different stock groupings defined by managers;
- the prior identification of undesirable outcomes including biological and socio-economic factors;

- that account be taken at each stage of the risks of not achieving the fisheries management objectives by considering uncertainty in the current state of the stocks, in biological reference points and fishery management capabilities;
- the formulation of pre-agreed management actions in the form of procedures to be applied over a range of stock conditions;
- assessment of the effectiveness of management actions in all salmon fisheries;
- stock rebuilding programmes be developed for stocks that are below their conservation limits.

The Agreement also notes that measures to minimise unreported catches and to improve estimates of them are consistent with the Precautionary Approach and that NASCO and its Parties agree to evaluate and report on progress in this area.

Decision Structure to aid the Council and Commissions of NASCO and the Relevant Authorities in Implementing the Precautionary Approach to Management of North Atlantic Salmon Fisheries

In 2002, to assist with application of the Precautionary Approach to management of salmon fisheries and to provide a basis for more consistent approaches to management of exploitation throughout the North Atlantic, the Council adopted a Decision Structure. This Decision Structure incorporates many of the elements concerning management of fisheries contained in the Agreement on Adoption of a Precautionary Approach. It indicates that the management procedure for both single and mixed stock fisheries should:

- a) describe the fishery;
- b) specify the reference points (conservation limits and/or management targets) or alternative measures used to define adequate abundance of the stock;
- c) describe the status of the stock/stocks relative to the measure of abundance in (b);
- d) assess if the stock/or stocks is/are meeting other diversity criteria;
- e) assess if the stock is threatened by factors other than fisheries;
- f) describe the management actions that will be employed to control harvest including measures to address any failure or trend in abundance or diversity, taking account of pre-agreed procedures;
- g) provide an outline of the programmes that will be used to monitor the effect of the management measures, identifying information deficiencies and a timeframe for resolution.

The Decision Structure also indicates that fishery management decisions should take account of: uncertainty in the assessments; abundance and diversity of the stock(s); selectivity of the fishery; any non-fishery factors affecting the stock(s); socio-economic factors; and other fisheries exploiting the stock(s). It also states that the expected extent and timescale of effects of management actions should be described. The Council has agreed Guiding Definitions of Terms Used in Salmon Fisheries Management (contained in document CNL(00)18) that include definitions of mixed and single stock fisheries, management targets and conservation limits.

Minimum Standard for Catch Statistics

The Minimum Standard for Catch Statistics states that:

- catch statistics should include catches from all components of the salmon fisheries where these are retained;
- include returns to ranching units;
- include both the number and weight of salmon;
- be differentiated into sea-age class or alternatively into grilse and multi-sea-winter salmon;
- differentiate, where possible, between wild fish and those which have escaped from fish farms;
- include salmon caught in non-salmon gear where retention of such fish is legal;
- information on fishing effort should, wherever possible, be obtained for all components of the salmon fisheries;

It is further stated that the Parties wish to:

- encourage studies to assess non-catch fishing mortality in both salmon directed and non-directed gears in particular unreported catches;
- encourage measures to reduce the level of non-catch fishing mortality (in both directed and non-directed gears) in particular unreported catches.

The Council has previously agreed that the Parties should provide information on unreported catches on an annual basis. The information sought is details of the management control and reporting systems; estimates of unreported catch; details of how the figure is derived; information on the extent of catch and release fishing; and the measures taken to minimise unreported catches. Following the Special Session on Unreported Catches in Bar Harbor last June, the Council agreed that in the light of the information presented, the Parties might consider how the issues of improving estimates of, and further minimising, unreported catches can be incorporated into their implementation plans. It is proposed that the present reporting on the estimates of unreported catches and on the extent of catch and release fishing be continued in the annual returns but that the other information concerning unreported catches be provided through the triennial fisheries management focus are reports

Issues to be raised with, and questions for, the Parties and relevant jurisdictions

Canada

The Focus Area Report indicates that Canada has introduced major changes to the management of its salmon fisheries with the closure of all its commercial fisheries, restrictions on the recreational fisheries and development of agreements on the First Nation's fisheries. The Review Group seeks the following clarification of the information provided in the Focus Area Report:

Reference points:

The Gulf Region Integrated Management Plan indicates that the present conservation limits will be retained until such time as more 'finite stock-specific conservation level criteria become available'. The report indicates that these will be developed nationally. What is the timescale for development of these criteria?

Stock status and abundance criteria:

The report indicates that there are about 900 salmon rivers and that about 70 of these rivers are assessed scientifically. This is a comprehensive monitoring programme, but almost half of these assessed rivers are in Quebec while in Labrador, where there is a mixed stock fishery, four rivers are monitored. Will the monitored sites in Labrador be maintained and are there plans to expand this monitoring in future?

Mixed stock fisheries:

The report refers to the introduction of measures, including prohibition of larger mesh nets, in 2006, to reduce the catch of large salmon in coastal areas of Labrador. The report indicates that the effectiveness of these measures will be evaluated and adjustments made if further reductions are warranted. What efforts are being made to determine the origin of the fish harvested in this fishery and what information is available on the effectiveness of the measures based on the evaluation of the fishery to date?

Management actions:

The report indicates that Canada's First Nations fisheries will continue to be subject to annual agreements. Are there any such fisheries exploiting stocks below conservation limits and, if so, what factors were taken into account in allowing a harvest?

The report refers to a Recovery Potential Assessment that is being undertaken for the Bay of Fundy stocks which are of special concern and protected by the Species at Risk Act. What is the timescale for completion of this assessment?

The report contains as annexes the management plans for Newfoundland and Labrador, Maritimes and the Gulf Region. There is no plan for Quebec. Does such a plan exist and can its key elements be summarised?

Socio-economic factors:

The Group is aware of a survey of recreational fishing in Canada conducted in 2005 and released in 2007. It is understood that the information on salmon fishing is not presented separately from other species. When will the information relating to salmon fishing contained in this report be made available?

Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) – Greenland

The Focus Area Report indicates that in response to the scientific advice major reductions in harvest have been made by Greenland by operating only a subsistence fishery. Greenland has only one salmon river, the stocks exploited in the Greenland fishery originate in other countries and management measures for the fishery are agreed internationally within NASCO. The Review Group seeks the following clarification of the information provided in the Focus Area Report:

Management actions:

The report refers only to the management of the current subsistence fishery. In the event that stock abundance improves and a commercial quota is allocated, how would such a fishery be managed?

It is reported that there is a discrepancy between the number of licences issued and the number of licences for which catch returns are made. What is known about the cause of this discrepancy?

The Review Group is aware that catches in the subsistence fishery have been increasing in recent years. The report indicates that a publicity campaign was instigated in 2006 and 2007 to improve catch reporting rates. What information is available on the success of this campaign in improving reporting of the catches in the subsistence fishery?

European Union – Denmark

The Focus Area Report reflects the fact that the Atlantic salmon resource in Denmark is currently small as a result of significant habitat degradation in the past. Efforts are now being made to rebuild the stocks through stocking and habitat restoration work and a National Salmon Management Plan has been developed. The Review Group seeks the following clarification of the information provided in the Focus Area Report:

Reference points:

It is noted that a target of at least 1,000 spawners annually has been set for each of four rivers. What is the basis for this target and what reference criteria are used for the management of other stocks?

Diversity criteria:

No information is available on the diversity of Danish salmon stocks. What efforts are being made to obtain such information and take account of this in the management of fisheries?

Mixed stock fisheries:

The report identifies mixed stock recreational fisheries operating in Danish coastal waters but provides no information on the contributing stocks. What information is available on the effects of these fisheries on individual stocks and how is this taken into account in the management of the fisheries?

Management actions:

The report refers to recreational fisheries in fresh water. What approach is used to control harvests in these fisheries, what account is taken of socio-economic factors and what is the proposed timescale for achieving the recovery targets?

European Union – Finland

The Focus Area Report notes that the two rivers in Finland with Atlantic salmon fisheries are both border rivers with Norway and that their management is largely through bilateral agreements. There are significant challenges in managing salmon in a large system like the Teno where stock structure is complex but progress is being made towards managing the fisheries in accordance with NASCO's agreements. The Review Group seeks the following clarification of the information provided in the Focus Area Report:

Reference points:

The Review Group recognises that progress is being made with the development of conservation limits. What is the timescale for establishing these and for utilising them in management in the rivers Teno and Naatamo?

Stock status and abundance criteria:

Concerns are raised about the abundance of MSW salmon from the upper tributaries and despite increasing effort in the recreational fisheries, catches in the last three years are among the lowest in the time-series. Given this information on abundance how is rod catch data being used to inform management of the fishery?

Mixed stock fisheries:

The report refers to net fisheries along the Norwegian coast. What actions have been taken to seek cooperation with Norway in the management of this mixed stock fishery?

Management actions:

The report indicates that while the management system for the majority of the fisheries is based upon a bilateral agreement dating from 1989 and is relatively inflexible, tourist angling is controlled in each country with regulations amended on an annual basis. What measures have been introduced or are planned to limit the tourist angling harvest, and is controlling this fishery alone sufficient to ensure conservation of the stocks?

European Union – Ireland

The Focus Area Report indicates that there have been major improvements in the management regime for the salmon fisheries in Ireland. Consistent with the scientific advice, the coastal mixed stock fishery was closed at the beginning of 2007, and exploitation is now restricted to estuary netting and angling on stocks that are above their conservation limits. The Review Group seeks the following clarification of the information provided in the Focus Area Report:

Stock status and abundance criteria:

The Review Group notes that management is based strictly on harvesting only the surplus above the conservation limits. What efforts are made to validate the status of the stocks using other measures of abundance such as juvenile surveys, etc?

Diversity criteria:

The report states that in many instances assessments are made for 1SW and MSW stocks separately. How are these assessments used in establishing the harvestable surplus for the fishery?

Management actions:

The report indicates that the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources is advised of any measures that may be required for the management of stocks by the Regional Fisheries Boards (RFBs). What are the obligations on the RFBs to seek implementation of management measures in line with national policy.

Socio-economic factors:

The report refers to a hardship scheme which was introduced for the fishermen affected by the decision to move to single stock salmon fishing only. Does this scheme have any implications for the level of fishing permitted in the fishery?

The Review Group notes that since the closure of the mixed stock fishery, the bulk of the salmon harvested in 2007 was taken by the recreational sector. Reference is made to a direction from the Minister that there should be a re-balancing of the allocation of salmon quotas. What socio-economic and other factors will be considered in this re-balancing and will any reallocation to commercial fisheries be only to fisheries in estuaries rather than those in the ocean?

European Union – UK (England and Wales)

The Focus Area Report notes that stocks in England and Wales are managed through the use of river specific Salmon Action Plans and employs conservation limits and management targets for the majority of rivers. Significant progress has been made in phasing out mixed stock fisheries. The Review Group seeks clarification on the following points in the Focus Area Report:

Mixed stock fisheries:

The Review Group notes that the Precautionary Approach principle was adopted to phase out some mixed stock fisheries. Is this same approach being applied to the management of the remaining mixed stock fisheries?

The report indicates that ‘pragmatic decisions’ had to be made to define the boundaries between coastal mixed stock fisheries and estuary fisheries. What criteria are used to make these decisions?

Management actions:

The Review Group notes that management plans are developed for the 64 ‘principal salmon rivers’ and the Severn estuary. What is the approach to managing any salmon stocks in the remaining rivers?

The report includes a flow diagram indicating how the need for fishing controls is evaluated. When options are identified, how is a particular option selected and subsequently implemented?

Timescales:

The report notes that there is a 5-10 year cycle for reviewing fishery regulations. Is there an ability to respond more rapidly to unexpected changes in stock abundance or diversity?

European Union – UK (Northern Ireland)

The Focus Area Report reflects the fact that the fisheries in the Foyle system have been managed using reference points for more than thirty years and there is a programme to establish conservation limits on other rivers. Significant reductions have been made to the

mixed stock coastal fisheries. The Review Group seeks clarification on the following points in the Focus Area Report:

Reference points:

The report indicates that conservation limits have been established for a number of rivers. What is the timescale for developing conservation limits on the other rivers and how is the status of these stocks currently being assessed?

Diversity criteria:

While the report indicates that there is a small component of MSW salmon in the stocks it does not indicate how this influences fishery management. How are the fisheries managed to ensure the conservation of this stock component?

Management actions:

The report indicates there has been a reduction in the number of nets in the coastal mixed stock fishery. What is the policy with regard to the remaining nets, how will socio-economic factors be taken into account and what is the timescale over which this policy will be implemented?

European Union – UK (Scotland)

The Focus Area Report reflects the fact that Scottish rivers produce a significant proportion of the wild salmon in the Southern North-East Atlantic region. Initiatives are underway to develop conservation limits or other indicators of abundance. There has been a very significant reduction in netting effort in recent decades although some substantial coastal mixed stock fisheries remain. The Review Group seeks clarification on the following points in the Focus Area Report:

Reference points:

The report indicates that if useful conservation limits can be established they will be used to set management targets designed to ensure sustainable fisheries. How will the validity of these conservation limits be assessed?

The report indicates that until useful conservation limits are available management decisions have to be based on other measures of abundance and that rod catch data are considered to be a proxy for abundance. To what extent is the rod catch methodology described in the report being used to inform management decisions? What checks are in place to confirm the accuracy of the catch figures and what allowances are made in the methodology for the effects of environmental conditions and other factors on catches?

Stock status and abundance criteria:

The report explains that the Decision Structure was used to evaluate the need for conservation measures on the North and South Esks and the Annan. Is it being applied to other rivers, and if not what is the basis for making management decisions?

Mixed stock fisheries:

The report indicates that mixed stock netting accounts for 30% of salmon exploitation in Scotland. The decision structure was used to determine the need to close the Strathy Point mixed stock net fishery. What measures are being taken or planned to manage the other mixed stock fisheries so as to protect stocks that are not meeting abundance targets, and what are the timescales for their implementation?

Management actions

The report refers to the use of Statutory Instruments. What is their purpose and function, and what other management measures can be used to control exploitation?

Iceland

The Focus Area Report indicates that salmon fisheries in Iceland are largely limited to angling and coastal mixed stock fisheries have been banned for decades. Effort in rod fisheries is limited and reporting of catches is believed to be very accurate. A programme for developing conservations limits is underway. The Review Group seeks clarification on the following points in the focus area report:

Reference points:

Stocks are currently managed on the basis of maintaining stable catches but it is not clear how this is achieved, particularly considering that there is significant year to year variability in catches (the min-max ranges are typically around 5) and mean catches have changed significantly (both upwards and downwards) in individual rivers over the past 30 years. How are the catch data being used to establish the status of the stocks and to influence management decisions?

Diversity criteria:

The report indicates that there has been a substantial decline in the catches of MSW salmon in Iceland and that the Angling Clubs have, therefore, been requested to introduce catch and release policies. In 2006, 32% of MSW salmon were released. Does the Competent Management Authority (CMA) consider this to be adequate, what level of protection is afforded to MSW stocks in individual rivers and what will the CMA do if this voluntary approach is not successful?

Management actions:

The report indicates that the management proposals for in-river fisheries have to be set out in an Effort Plan prepared by the local Fishery Association. The Implementation Plan also

refers to both an Effort Plan and a Conservation Plan but the relationship between these plans and their roles in fisheries management are not clear. What do these Plans contain, how are the management controls determined and what powers do the CMA have to make changes?

It appears that the main driver for the management of Icelandic salmon fisheries is the maintenance of catch levels and thereby their economic value. What mechanisms are available to management authorities to respond to evidence of poor stock status?

Timescales:

The report suggests that the development of conservation limits for all Icelandic rivers may take 5-10 years. However, the Icelandic Implementation Plan indicates that conservation limits will be prepared for all rivers by 2009. What is the expected timescale for development of conservation limits that will be used in fishery management?

Norway

The Focus Area Report reflects the fact that Norwegian rivers produce a significant proportion of the wild salmon in the Northern North-East Atlantic region, although a number of them have been severely impacted by acid rain and G. salaris. Norway is also one of the largest producers of farmed salmon and this has implications for the management of the wild stocks and their fisheries. A fishery management plan for the period 2008-12 has been developed to address the NASCO agreements. Substantial mixed stock coastal fisheries remain. The Review Group seeks clarification on the following points in the Focus Area Report:

Stock status and abundance criteria:

Preliminary conservation limits have been established for 180 rivers and a programme is in place to develop conservation limits for the remaining stocks by 2009. How is stock status being assessed to support the current round of management changes on rivers without conservation limits? As the conservation limits are regarded as preliminary, what is being done to validate them and in what timescale?

Management actions:

The report indicates that fishery regulations for 2008 -2012 will be based on a number of sets of guidelines, and that County Governors are required to take these into account. What obligations are there upon local managers to follow these guidelines and how is the implementation of new management measures affected by private ownership of fisheries (e.g. in the coastal mixed stock fisheries)?

There are substantial numbers of fish farm escapees caught in Norwegian fisheries. How is this taken into account in assessing the status of stocks and determining the need for management measures?

The Review Group is aware that salmon from rivers in Finland and Russia are taken in mixed stock fisheries along the Norwegian coast. What actions have been taken to limit this interception to acceptable levels?

Socio-economic factors:

The report indicates that stakeholders are consulted during the development of new management measures. What effect do stakeholder views and socio-economic factors have on decision making?

Russian Federation

The Focus Area Report indicates that all fisheries for salmon in the Russian Federation are licensed, and there are comprehensive controls on exploitation by means of TACs and quotas, which are applied to all removals. Quotas in mixed stock fisheries are being reduced, and catch and release is widely employed in recreational rod fisheries. The Review Group seeks clarification on the following points in the Focus Area Report:

Reference points:

Russia has developed conservation limits for the majority of its stocks, except those in Karelia, where data are limited and stocks are believed to be in a generally poor condition. The report indicates that in some rivers adult returns are very much larger than the conservation limits (e.g. more than 5 times), which suggests that the conservation limits may be too low. What process is there for reviewing whether the current conservation limits are correct, and how is the stock status determined in those rivers without conservation limits? What is the timescale for developing conservation limits in Karelia and how do the authorities currently use catch data to manage the fisheries.

Stock status and abundance criteria:

The Pechora river supports one of the largest salmon river stocks in the North Atlantic and has been well monitored for more than 30 years, but information on this river within the report is limited and it is not clear why the fisheries have been closed despite the adult returns being well above the spawner requirement. What was the basis for closing the fishery?

Mixed stock fisheries:

The report indicates that there is a policy to reduce the exploitation in the mixed stock salmon fisheries operating in the White Sea. What is the long-term management objective for this fishery and over what timescale will it be implemented?

Management actions:

The report indicates that all salmon fisheries are licensed and that TACs and quotas are used to control all harvests and other removals of salmon. How are the TACs established and how are quotas then allocated to the individual fisheries?

The report refers to illegal fishing in rivers flowing through populated areas and that 70% of

the returning stock may be taken illegally in the river Umba. What is being done to manage this illegal activity?

The report indicates that ‘users’ can adjust the fishing effort applied to different biological groups of salmon. How is the need for such adjustments made and how are they addressed by regulatory measures?

The report refers to possible by-catches in herring fisheries in the White Sea. What is being done to assess and manage this problem?

USA

The Focus Area Report reflects the fact that returns to rivers in the US are very low and that many of the salmon populations have been listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. As a consequence directed fisheries for Atlantic salmon are not permitted other than on reconditioned broodstock in two rivers and a more recent small catch and release fishery in the Penobscot River. Considerable efforts have also been made to eliminate by-catch of salmon. The Review Group seeks clarification on the following points in the Focus Area Report:

Description of fisheries:

The report states that the subsistence fishery off West Greenland could harvest 3 – 45 % of the total documented returns to the listed rivers during the years 2000, 2001 and 2002. What is the basis for this statement?

Management actions:

The report refers to a wide range of measures to reduce by-catch of salmon in both marine fisheries and freshwater fisheries. These include public outreach and educational campaigns designed to reduce the potential for anglers to misidentify salmon. To what extent have these programmes been implemented?

The Review Group notes that the July 2006 Status Review for Anadromous Atlantic Salmon prepared by the state and federal agencies proposes that the rivers Androscoggin, Kennebec and Penobscot should be listed under the ESA. Is it proposed to implement this recommendation and if so in what timescale?