

Agenda item 6.1(b)
For decision

Council

CNL(06)16

Report of the 'Next Steps for NASCO' Task Force

CNL(06)16

Report of the 'Next Steps for NASCO' Task Force

Background

1. To mark NASCO's Twentieth Anniversary, the Council had established a Working Group on the 'Next Steps for NASCO' which met during 2004 and 2005 and presented its recommendations to the Council at last year's Annual Meeting in Vichy. In the light of these recommendations, the Council adopted a Strategic Approach for NASCO's Next Steps, CNL(05)49, which contained some decisions for immediate implementation and others which required further consideration to effect their implementation. In order to further consider the latter recommendations, the Council established a Task Force, under the Chairmanship of Mr Gudmundur Helgason (Iceland), which met at the invitation Secretaria General de Pesca in Cangas de Onis, Asturias, Spain, during 31 January – 3 February 2006. The main tasks for this Task Force were to further develop recommendations in relation to implementation, commitment and accountability (Decisions 20 – 22 of CNL(05)49) and transparency and inclusivity (Decision 23 of CNL(05)49) two central themes of the Strategic Approach. The report of the meeting, NSTF(06)13, is attached.

Implementation, Commitment and Accountability

2. Under the Strategic Approach, the Council had decided that:
 - each Party or relevant jurisdiction should develop an Implementation Plan for meeting the objectives of NASCO's agreements and report on the steps taken pursuant to the Plan;
 - reporting on progress should be conducted in a Special Session so as to allow direct NGO involvement, greater opportunity for discussion, and critical review of the reports;
 - an *ad hoc* group should be established to support the President in determining the conclusions of the Special Session at which progress reports are made.
3. The Task Force agreed that Implementation Plans need to be clear and comprehensive, but focused on high-level commitments rather than specific actions. It was agreed that to avoid duplication of reporting all elements on which the Parties currently report to the Council should, in future, be incorporated in annual reports under the Implementation Plans, and that in addition there would be reporting in Special Sessions on NASCO's three focus areas (fisheries management, habitat and aquaculture, etc.). It was recognised that while it would be desirable to develop a common format for the Implementation Plans, there would inevitably be differences in the approaches adopted by the Parties and relevant jurisdictions with regard to the measures taken. ***The Task Force therefore developed 'Guidelines for the Preparation of Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress' and these are contained in Annex 3 of the attached report. The Council is asked to consider and adopt these guidelines.***
4. The Task Force agreed that it would be desirable for the Parties to report on progress in development of their Implementation Plans at a Special Session during the

Council's Twenty-Third Annual Meeting in Finland and that following development of the plans, they should be subject to a thorough critical review by the *ad hoc* Review Group which would report back to the Council before its 2007 Annual Meeting. The Task Force noted that, depending on progress with the Implementation Plans, it may be possible to initiate a Special Session on focus areas in 2007 rather than 2008. *The Task Force's recommendations on the structure and functioning of the ad hoc Review Group, and a proposed schedule of activities, are contained in Annex 5 of the attached report. The Council is asked to consider and adopt these recommendations.*

Transparency and Inclusivity

5. *The Task Force developed its recommendations in relation to NGO participation in NASCO's meetings and these are contained in Annex 4 of the attached report. The Council is asked to consider and adopt these changes to the conditions governing observer attendance at its meeting.*

Conclusions

6. Implementation, commitment and accountability and transparency and inclusivity are central elements of the 'Next Steps' process and the Task Force has developed recommendations which the Council is asked to consider. In particular, the critical review process is essential in ensuring that the agreements made in NASCO, which our stakeholders felt were good, are fully implemented. **It was the Council's intention that the Task Force's recommendations would be applied at the Twenty-Third Annual Meeting.**

Secretary
Edinburgh
7 April 2006

NSTF(06)13

Report of the Task Force on Implementation of the Next Steps for NASCO

*Hotel Parador de Cangas de Onis, Asturias, Spain,
31 January – 3 February 2006*

1. Opening of the meeting, and overview and discussion of the Next Steps process

- 1.1 The Chairman, Mr Gudmundur Helgason (Iceland), opened the meeting, welcomed members of the Task Force to Spain and thanked the Secretaria General de Pesca for hosting the meeting and for the arrangements made. He welcomed the Chairman of NASCO's NGOs, Mr Chris Poupard, and indicated that he was welcome to participate in all the Task Force's plenary sessions. He referred to the progress made to date in charting out the Next Steps for NASCO and to the adoption by the Council at its Twenty-Second Annual Meeting of a Strategic Approach for NASCO's 'Next Steps', CNL(05)49 (hereinafter referred to as the 'Strategic Approach'). Under this Strategic Approach it is stated that NASCO's vision is to pursue the restoration of abundant Atlantic salmon stocks throughout the species' range with the aim of providing the greatest possible benefits to society and individuals. To achieve this vision, NASCO will *inter alia* be committed to the measures and agreements it develops and actively review progress with Implementation Plans, and ensure transparency in its operations and enhance the use of NGO and stakeholder knowledge and experience. He indicated that the Task Force had been asked to comprehensively develop recommendations in relation to these two central themes of the Strategic Approach. He suggested that in carrying out its work the Task Force might wish to bear in mind the philosophical view that while simple solutions may not always be best, the best solutions are always simple.
- 1.2 Mr Poupard stated that the NGOs applauded the approach taken by NASCO with regard to the 'Next Steps' process and indicated that they are delighted with the progress to date. He noted that the NGOs had favoured changing NASCO's mandate but recognised the difficulties of such a change and the possibility of unintended consequences. The NGOs had, therefore, supported the alternative of developing Implementation Plans. He stressed that improving implementation, commitment and accountability are central to the Next Steps process and it is important that the Task Force's recommendations on this issue enhance the way forward for NASCO.
- 1.3 The Task Force adopted its agenda, NSTF(06)9 (Annex 1), after combining items 1 and 2 of the Draft Agenda.
- 1.4 A list of participants is included in Annex 2.

2. NASCO Agreements: Implementation, commitment and accountability

- 2.1 Under the Strategic Approach the Council had decided that:
 - each Party or relevant jurisdiction should develop an Implementation Plan for meeting the objectives of NASCO's agreements and report on the steps taken pursuant to the Plan. These arrangements would be evaluated after a trial period;

- reporting on progress should be conducted in a Special Session so as to allow direct NGO involvement, greater opportunity for discussion, and critical review of the reports;
 - an *ad hoc* group should be established to support the President in determining the conclusions of the Special Session at which progress reports are made.
- 2.2 Background papers in relation to implementation, commitment and accountability were tabled by the Secretariat (NSTF(06)4), Iceland (NSTF(06)5), the European Union (NSTF(06)6), and Norway (NSTF(06)7). These papers contained a number of common themes with regard to the key elements to be included in Implementation Plans and on reporting arrangements. The Task Force discussed a number of issues in relation to implementation, commitment and accountability including whether there should be just one Implementation Plan for each Party or jurisdiction covering all of NASCO's agreements, the scope and key elements to be included in the plans, the arrangements and standards for reporting, and approaches to avoid duplication of reporting. The Task Force agreed to consider the composition and functioning of the *ad hoc* Review Group under item 3 below. The Task Force agreed that Implementation Plans needed to be clear and comprehensive but focused on high-level commitments rather than specific actions and should facilitate evaluation of progress in achieving NASCO's overall goals and those of the three main agreements (management of fisheries, habitat protection and restoration, and aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics). The Task Force recognised that while it would be desirable to develop a common format for the Implementation Plans there would inevitably be differences in the approaches adopted by the Parties and relevant jurisdictions with regard to the measures taken.
- 2.3 The Task Force recognized that the present reporting arrangements using the Council's twenty-page questionnaire were not transparent, did not facilitate information exchange on best practice and were not challenging. It was recognized that to avoid duplication in reporting, consideration might be given to including reporting under Articles 14 and 15 of the Convention and by homewater Parties (see paragraph 5.3 below) in the annual reporting arrangements under the Implementation Plans.
- 2.4 The Task Force agreed to develop its recommendations on Implementation Plans and reporting through a sub-group chaired by Mr Ted Potter (European Union). The sub-group developed 'Guidelines for the Preparation of Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress', NSTF(06)10 (Annex 3). The Task Force recommends adoption of these guidelines by the Council.
- 2.5 The Task Force discussed the timescale for development of Implementation Plans and recognized that it would be desirable for the Parties to report on progress in developing their plans at a Special Session during the Council's next Annual Meeting in Finland. Following development of the plans the Task Force believes they should be subject to a thorough critical review by the *ad hoc* Review Group. This critical review process would also apply to subsequent reporting at Special Sessions on focus areas (i.e. on management of fisheries, habitat protection and restoration, and minimising impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics) but not to the annual progress reports on the Implementation Plans which would be presented to the Council. A proposed process and timetable for the reviews is

referred to in paragraph 3.3 below. The need to allocate sufficient time to the Special Sessions was recognized. The Task Force noted the importance of moving in this new direction in a flexible manner with a view to making adjustments as required. In this regard, it was recognized that the process envisaged is iterative with the Parties adapting their approaches as necessary in the light of the reviews. Mr Poupard indicated that he welcomed the development of Implementation Plans in order to improve accountability, but stressed the need for there to be clear commitments in the Plans and timescales for their achievement.

3. Transparency and inclusivity

- 3.1 Under the Strategic Approach, the Council agreed to seek ways to increase NGO involvement in its meetings by amending the current NGO observer rules to provide discretion to the NASCO President and Commission Chairmen to recognise requests from the floor by observers on any agenda item under discussion before and after debate by the Parties on that item. A background paper on possible amendments to the rules governing the role of NGO observers was tabled by the Secretariat, NSTF(06)3. The Task Force discussed a number of issues concerning NGO participation at NASCO meetings, including the procedures for admitting NGOs, their representation at meetings and the possibility of charging an observer fee. The Task Force recognised that these issues were beyond its mandate but were important issues that might be considered in the future by the Council. The Task Force also discussed the structure and functioning of the *ad hoc* Review Group.
- 3.2 The Task Force agreed to develop its recommendations in relation to the conditions governing NGO attendance and the structure and functioning of the *ad hoc* Review Group through a sub-group chaired by Mr Guy Beaupré (Canada). The Task Force's recommendations on amendments to the conditions for NGO attendance are contained in NSTF(06)11 (Annex 4). With regard to Condition 4, the Task Force discussed whether or not there should be additional opportunities for NGO participation by allowing interventions during as well as before and after debate of agenda items by the Parties. The Task Force decided to adhere to the mandate outlined in the Strategic Approach, but recommends that this issue be considered further by the Council. The Task Force also discussed the issue of whether or not NGOs should be able to make interventions on all Council and Commission agenda items and decided that this should be the case with the exception of those agenda items dealing with financial and administrative issues. The Task Force also considered the largely symbolic issue of seating arrangements for the NGO representatives making interventions at the meetings. Mr Poupard indicated that he would prefer that the existing arrangements be maintained rather than the NGO representatives being seated at the centre table as the existing arrangement facilitates consultations among the NGO Group. The Task Force recognised that these conditions may be further reviewed by the Council in future in the light of experience with the new arrangements.
- 3.3 The Task Force discussed the structure and functioning of the *ad hoc* Review Group and agreed that it should comprise a mix of participants from the Parties and the NGOs that will ensure its effectiveness, efficiency and credibility. The Task Force's recommendations on the structure and functioning of the *ad hoc* Review Group and a proposed schedule of activities are contained in NSTF(06)12 (Annex 5). The Task Force recognised that the effectiveness of the review process was very dependent on the deadlines in this schedule being rigidly adhered to by the Parties. As an

alternative option to the schedule outlined in Annex 5, the Task Force noted that, pending progress with the Implementation Plans, it may be possible to initiate the Special Sessions on focus areas in 2007 rather than 2008. There is a need to ensure, however, that given the importance of the Implementation Plans and the annual reports submitted pursuant to these plans, adequate time is available in 2006 and 2007 to dedicate to these issues. This decision may be reviewed at the 2006 Annual Meeting in the light of the Parties' experience in drafting their Implementation Plans.

4. Progress Report on Public Relations

- 4.1 Under the Strategic Approach (Decisions 13 – 18) the Council had agreed to create a Public Relations Group which, with input from NASCO's accredited NGOs, would develop and implement a clear public relations strategy aimed at enhancing NASCO's profile and ensuring the most effective publicity for its work and achievements. The Council had also agreed to develop links with educational programmes and to consider the need for additional reports to improve public understanding of information relevant to NASCO's activities. The Secretariat was also asked to engage professional expertise to produce media products and to improve the Organization's website, and funds had been made available through both the 2005 and 2006 budgets for public relations work.
- 4.2 The Chairman noted that while the Council had not asked the Task Force to advise on public relations, it would be useful to have a report on progress and an initial exchange of views. The Secretary reported that he had engaged a firm of professional media consultants, Porter Novelli, to undertake a trial public-relations exercise to raise NASCO's profile. A factsheet on NASCO had been developed and some interviews conducted with journalists which had led to some articles about NASCO appearing in a UK national newspaper and a trade journal, and other articles were expected. The Secretary indicated that all media articles resulting from the pilot study will be circulated to Heads of Delegations. Some initial lessons had been learned and, based on the pilot trial, the consultants' advice on a media strategy for NASCO would be presented to the Public Relations Group. He asked for views from the Parties and the Chairman of the NGOs as to the composition and working methods of the Public Relations Group. He advised the Task Force that a motion supporting NASCO is to be tabled in the Scottish Parliament in March. Such initiatives may be a very effective way of raising NASCO's public and political profile. The Parties asked that if further articles are published in the media, copies be made available to Heads of Delegations at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.3 Mr Poupard stated that NASCO's NGOs, particularly those from North America, have considerable expertise and experience in public relations work and that they support a partnership with NASCO through the Public Relations Group with the objective of raising the Organization's profile. He suggested that this was perhaps a more appropriate approach than employing professional public relations advisors at this stage.
- 4.4 The Task Force recognised that there may be a need for a mix of expertise on the Public Relations Group, including salmon biologists and managers, media experts from the Parties and representatives of the NGOs. The Chairman indicated that he would be willing to consult Heads of Delegations with the aim of ensuring an appropriate mix of expertise on the Group and that this matter would be considered

further at the next Annual Meeting. The Task Force also recognised that the recent publication ‘NASCO’s Twenty-Year Milestones and Next Steps – A Vision for the Future’ was a very useful summary of NASCO’s work and future challenges and should be widely circulated. This action alone could raise NASCO’s profile considerably.

5. Other aspects relating to the Strategic Approach

(a) Consideration of a Ministerial Conference supporting salmon conservation

5.1 In the Strategic Approach (Decision 2), the Council agreed to explore the feasibility of arranging a Ministerial Conference to strengthen the Parties’ commitment to the conservation of wild salmon through the NASCO Convention.

5.2 The Chairman reminded the Task Force that at the Council’s last Annual Meeting different views had been expressed by the Parties about the feasibility of organizing a Ministerial Conference and that it might, therefore, assist the Council in considering this further if the Task Force could have a general discussion on this issue. The Task Force recognised that organising a Ministerial Conference on salmon would be a very significant undertaking and there would be a need to have clear objectives for such a conference before proceeding, e.g. to launch the Implementation Plans or in relation to the SALSEA programme. Some Parties felt that it would be easy to achieve but some would find it more difficult. So while there was a degree of interest in the principle of such a conference the Task Force did not believe it would be feasible at present. If, at a later date, a Ministerial Conference was proposed, it was stated that the NGOs could play a role in influencing participation by Ministers. The Task Force discussed the possibility of salmon issues being incorporated onto the agenda for the annual North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers’ Conference. It was recognised, however, that not all NASCO Parties are represented at this conference and for some Parties it is the Minister of Agriculture or of the Environment who has the responsibility for salmon management. There might also be opportunities to raise salmon issues when two or more Ministers meet.

(b) Format for reporting by homewater Parties to Commissions on their management measures

5.3 One of the key issues identified in the Strategic Approach with regard to management of salmon fisheries is the need to explore opportunities to improve the fairness and balance in management of distant-water fisheries. The Council had, therefore, decided that the homewater Parties should inform the relevant NASCO Commission of the management measures established or envisaged and their expected effects (Decision 3). It was agreed that a format should be developed by the Secretariat in conjunction with the Task Force. The Secretary introduced paper NSTF(06)8 which outlined options for such reporting. The Task Force recognised that there is already a considerable reporting burden on the Parties and that the challenge was to ensure that information was made available to allow Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) to review the measures taken without duplication of existing reporting and without the volume of information being overwhelming. In this regard, the ‘Guidelines for the Preparation of Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress’ referred to in paragraph 2.4 of this report indicate that the annual report on the Implementation Plan should include details of management measures established

or envisaged for homewater fisheries and their expected effects. The representative of Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) confirmed that this reporting arrangement was adequate to allow his delegation to assess fairness and balance in management measures.

(c) Development of multi-year regulatory measures/requests for scientific advice

- 5.4 In the Strategic Approach, the Council had asked the Commissions of NASCO to consider whether regulatory measures for fisheries could be adopted, and scientific advice from ICES sought, on a biennial or multi-year basis (Decision 4). The Standing Scientific Committee (SSC) had been asked to prepare a discussion document on the options for changing the request for scientific advice in the event that multi-year regulatory measures are agreed and to report back to the Parties before the next Annual Meeting. The Chairman of the SSC indicated that a draft discussion document had been developed and was presently with the SSC for its consideration. It outlined a number of options for changing the request to ICES for scientific advice in the event that multi-annual measures were adopted. However, the existence of objection procedures under Article 13 of the Convention and the possible 'opt-out' arrangements in flexible measures could create uncertainty about the need for catch advice in any year during a multi-annual measure. Any proposal to change the frequency of the catch advice would, therefore, need careful consideration by the Parties and consultations with ICES to ensure that NASCO continues to have the best advice on which to base establishment of regulatory measures and to review the continuing validity of multi-annual measures.
- 5.5 There was general recognition that it would be beneficial to have multi-year regulatory measures, not least so as to free up some time for Special Sessions. Successful agreement of multi-year regulatory measures, however, may or may not be accompanied by a reduction in the frequency of scientific advice. The Parties stressed the importance of the continued maintenance of the scientific databases and ensuring the availability of information on change in abundance that would require changes to the measure.

6. Any other business

- 6.1 There was no other business.

7. Report of the meeting

- 7.1 The Task Force agreed a report of the meeting.

8. Close of meeting

- 8.1 Mr Poupard thanked the Task Force for the open and transparent manner in which it had conducted its work and indicated that he would be reporting positively on the outcome of the meeting to the NGOs. He indicated that he was very satisfied with the recommendations developed.
- 8.2 The Chairman thanked the Spanish hosts for the excellent and enjoyable arrangements made and the members of the Task Force for their contributions. He wished all participants a safe journey home.

NSTF(06)9

Task Force on Implementation of the Next Steps for NASCO

**Hotel Parador de Cangas de Onis, Asturias, Spain,
31 January – 2 February 2006**

Agenda

- 1. Opening of the meeting and Overview and discussion of the Next Steps process**
- 2. Decisions requiring further consideration**
 - 3.1 *NASCO Agreements: Implementation, commitment and accountability*
 - (a) Implementation Plans: Scope and key elements (Decision 20 of CNL(05)49)
 - (b) Reporting and critical review in Special Sessions (Decision 21)
 - (c) Structure, role and functioning of an *ad hoc* “review group” (Decision 22)
 - 3.2 *Transparency and inclusivity*
 - (a) Amendments to current rules governing the role of NGO observers (Decision 23)
- 3. Progress Report on Public Relations (Decisions 13 – 18)**
- 4. Elements for immediate implementation that may need clarification**
 - (a) Consideration of a Ministerial Conference supporting salmon conservation (Decision 2)
 - (b) Format for reporting by home-water Parties to Commissions on their management measures (Decision 3)
 - (c) Development of multi-year regulatory measures/requests for scientific advice (Decision 4)
 - (d) Other elements
- 5. Development of recommendations to Council**
- 6. Any other business**
- 7. Report of the meeting**
- 8. Close of meeting**

Task Force on Implementation of the Next Steps for NASCO

List of Participants

CANADA

Mr Guy Beaupré	Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Ottawa, Ontario
Mr John Bird	Bird Holdings Ltd, Fredericton, New Brunswick
Mr Serge Tremblay	Ministère des Ressources Naturelles et de la Faune du Québec, Québec, Canada
Mr Tim Young	Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Ottawa, Ontario

DENMARK (IN RESPECT OF THE FAROE ISLANDS AND GREENLAND)

Mr Emanuel Rosing	Department of Fisheries and Hunting, Nuuk, Greenland
Ms Mira Ann Kalsi	Department of Fisheries and Hunting, Nuuk, Greenland
Mr Kaj P Mortensen	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Faroe Islands

EUROPEAN UNION

Ms Carmen Beraldi	Secretaria General de Pesca, Madrid, Spain
Ms Paloma Carballo	Ministerio de Agricultura y Pesca, Madrid, Spain
Mr Richard Cowan	DEFRA, London, UK
Mr David Dunkley	SEERAD, Edinburgh, UK
Mr Alan Gray	European Commission, Brussels, Belgium
Mr Pentti Munne	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Department of Fisheries and Game, Helsinki, Finland
Mr Ted Potter	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, Lowestoft, UK

ICELAND

Mr Guðmundur B Helgason	Ministry of Agriculture, Reykjavik
Mr Arni Isaksson	Directorate of Freshwater Fisheries, Reykjavik

NORWAY

Mr Raoul Bierach Directorate for Nature Management, Trondheim

Mr Arne Eggereide Directorate for Nature Management, Trondheim

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Dr Svetlana Krylova FSO “Murmanrybvod”, Murmansk

Dr Boris Prischepa PINRO, Murmansk

Dr Sergei Prusov PINRO, Murmansk

Mr Rafael Ruzheinikov FSO “Murmanrybvod”, Murmansk

Ms Elena Samoylova PINRO, Murmansk

USA

Ms Kimberly Blankenkemper National Marine Fisheries Service, Silver Spring, Maryland

Ms Mary Colligan National Marine Fisheries Service, Gloucester, Massachusetts

Ms K. Alexandra Curtis Office of Marine Conservation & Oceans Affairs, Washington DC, USA

Ms Jessica Pruden National Marine Fisheries Service, Gloucester, Massachusetts

NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Mr Chris Poupard Chairman of NASCO NGO Group

SECRETARIAT

Dr Malcolm Windsor Secretary

Dr Peter Hutchinson Assistant Secretary

NSTF(06)10

Guidelines for the Preparation of NASCO “Implementation Plans” and for Reporting on Progress

Purpose of Implementation Plans

NASCO and its Parties have agreed to adopt and apply a Precautionary Approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of salmon in order to protect the resource and preserve the environments in which it lives. To this end, NASCO has adopted a number of Resolutions and Agreements which address the Organization’s principal areas of concern for the management of salmon stocks. The Organization has also developed Guidelines on topics which have a more general relevance to salmon management, including the consideration of social and economic factors in decisions under the Precautionary Approach and the development of stock rebuilding programmes.

As part of the ‘Next Steps’ process, NASCO has determined that it needs to develop a simpler and more transparent approach for reporting on progress on the implementation of these agreements. NASCO has therefore agreed that each Party or relevant jurisdiction should develop an Implementation Plan for meeting the objectives of NASCO’s agreements and should subsequently report to NASCO on actions taken to meet its management objectives.

The Implementation Plans will address NASCO’s overall objective of ensuring the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks, and will be focused around the three main agreements which address fishery management, protection and restoration of habitat, and aquaculture and associated activities. The overall goals of these agreements are summarised below:

Management of salmon fisheries

The goals for the management of salmon fisheries for NASCO and its Parties are to promote the diversity and abundance of salmon stocks and to maintain all stocks above their conservation limits (reference Action Plan for Application of the Precautionary Approach, CNL(99)48).

Protection and restoration of Atlantic salmon habitat

The goal for NASCO and its Parties is to maintain and, where possible, increase the current productive capacity of Atlantic salmon habitat.

Management of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics

The goal for NASCO and its Parties is to minimise the possible adverse impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics on the wild stocks of Atlantic salmon, including working with industry stakeholders, where appropriate.

The Implementation Plans will be subject to critical review by Parties and NGOs by means of an agreed review process. In order for Implementation Plans to be effective it will be important for proposed actions and activities to have measurable outputs. The review process may result in suggestions to modify Implementation Plans to address any concerns expressed.

NASCO has also agreed to modify its reporting procedures to make them clearer and more transparent. The development of Implementation Plans will provide the basis for the preparation of regular reports on the extent to which the proposed actions have been undertaken and objectives have been achieved. These reports will also be subject to review to provide constructive comment on the progress made within each jurisdiction towards meeting the objectives of the Organization.

This document is designed to provide guidance on the structure and content of the Implementation Plans and describe the process that will be adopted for reporting progress to NASCO. It is recognised that the Implementation Plans developed by different jurisdictions may differ significantly depending on the nature and status of stocks, the management regimes in place and other factors.

Structure and Format of Implementation Plans

It is important that Implementation Plans are presented in a clear and straight-forward manner so that they are easily understood by both managers and stakeholders. It is anticipated that an Implementation Plan would normally:

- apply to all the stocks/fisheries managed within a jurisdiction;
- apply for a period of at least 5 years, and generally require no annual modification unless circumstances change significantly;
- provide a summary of the management approaches that will be utilised to meet the objectives and the anticipated results, rather than details of specific actions to be applied to individual stocks;
- be consistent with and adopt approaches specified within NASCO Resolutions and Agreements;
- take account of NASCO Guidelines as appropriate to the management approach;
- be written in a clear and concise form for easy accessibility and reference (e.g. use numbered paragraphs); and
- describe a process and proposed outputs that are open to critical evaluation.

Outline Content of Implementation Plans

It is recognised that Implementation Plans will necessarily reflect the management requirements of different jurisdictions. However, it is proposed that the basic structure of the Implementation Plans should usually include the following key elements:

1. Introduction

This section should provide a general picture of the resource and the management structure in place within the relevant jurisdiction. Sub-headings within this section might include:

- 1.1 objectives of the national management strategy (e.g. may be similar to NASCO Vision);

- 1.2 nature and extent of resource (e.g. number and size of stocks, special designations, etc.);
- 1.3 overview of fisheries (e.g. methods, locations, etc), including the existing management regime (e.g. types of regulations, enforcement activities, etc.);
- 1.4 management entities involved in fishery regulation and habitat protection/restoration (e.g. who does what and by what means).

2. *Status of stocks*

This section should describe the current status of stocks for future comparisons. It might provide a brief overview of current status of stocks assessed against reference levels (in accordance with the NASCO Decision Structure). Sub-headings within this section might include:

- 2.1 abundance (e.g. egg deposition, juvenile densities, and/or returning adults);
- 2.2 diversity (e.g. age composition, run-timing, etc.);
- 2.3 threatened or endangered stocks.

3. *Threats to stocks, and current management measures*

Some river stocks remain below reference levels and are subject to a range of real and potential threats to their status. It is recognised that a wide range of management measures are already in place to address these threats. This section should provide a summary of the threats and outline the existing management measures, with specific reference to the extent to which NASCO's Resolutions and Agreements have been applied. This information will provide the baseline for developing the management plan described in Section 4, and might be presented in the following sub-sections:

- 3.1 effects of all salmon fisheries and fisheries taking juvenile or adult salmon as a by-catch (including fisheries in distant and home waters);
- 3.2 factors affecting estuarine and freshwater salmon habitat;
- 3.3 impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics (including diseases and parasites);
- 3.4 other influences affecting salmon abundance or diversity (including marine environment).

4. *Management approach*

This section should provide a clear account of the management approach which will be used to address the problems identified in Section 3 over a period of about five years. It is important that the approaches described have measurable outputs against which subsequent reports can be assessed. The approaches should be presented under four headings: management of fisheries; protection and restoration of salmon habitats; management of aquaculture, introductions and transfers; and other influences. In each of these areas, the socio-economic implications of proposed actions should be considered. It will also be appropriate to identify data deficiencies and research needs in relation to each of these focus areas.

- Management of fisheries: to provide a summary of the approach that will be adopted to review and modify fishery regulations including both routine periodic reviews and

the introduction of emergency measures; to include reference to/use of NASCO Decision Structure (SCPA(02)16) as appropriate;
[Subsequent reporting could describe numbers of fisheries for which control measures have been reviewed and actions taken to change regulations.]

- Protect and restore salmon habitat: to provide a summary of the approach that will be adopted to assess estuarine and freshwater habitat quality, identify problems and prioritise remedial actions, taking account of the guidance in the NASCO Plan of Action for the Protection and Restoration of Atlantic Salmon Habitat (CNL(01)51);
[Subsequent reporting could describe numbers of rivers for which habitat problems have been reviewed or habitat plans developed and provide a summary of mitigation, restoration or protection measures introduced]
- Manage aquaculture, introductions and transfers: to include a summary of the approach that will be adopted to minimise any adverse impacts from aquaculture and control introductions and transfers, in line with the Williamsburg Resolution (CNL(04)54);
[Subsequent reporting could summarise specific actions taken to control introductions and transfers and minimise any adverse impacts from aquaculture]
- Actions to be taken in relation other influences: to include a summary of the approach that will be adopted to address other influences identified in Section 3.4, such as those that may be reducing the marine survival of stocks; this might also include collaborative action such as through the SALSEA research programme;
[Subsequent reporting could summarise specific actions taken to address other influences]

5. Evaluation

To provide a summary of monitoring and evaluation activities that will be used to assess status of stocks and the efficacy of management measures.

Reporting procedures

Reports on actions taken to address Implementation Plans will be provided in two formats: written annual reports; and oral and written reports presented to Special Sessions.

Annual reports:

Reports will be provided on an annual basis by each Party or relevant jurisdiction. The primary purpose of these reports is to provide a summary of all the actions that have been taken under the Implementation Plan (Section 4) in the previous year. In addition, any significant changes to the status of stocks, factors affecting stocks and the management regime in place should be included in the report.

The annual report will therefore provide the following information:

1. a statement of any significant changes to the management outlined in the introduction to the Plan;
2. a description of significant changes to the status of stocks, and information on catches required under Article 15.1 and 15.2;

3. a description of new factors within the territory or area of fisheries jurisdiction which may significantly affect the abundance of salmon stocks (Article 15.5(c) of the Convention);
4. an account of actions taken under the four headings in Section 4 of the Implementation Plan including:
 - the adoption or repeal in the past year of laws, regulations and programmes relating to the NASCO objectives or any commitments to such measures as required under Article 15.5 (a and b), including management measures established or envisaged for homewater fisheries and their expected effects;
 - where appropriate, jurisdictions should also provide reports required under Article 14;
5. proposed revisions to the Implementation Plan.

Special Session reports:

Reports to Special Sessions will provide a more in-depth assessment of actions taken under one of the Focus Areas in Section 4 of the Implementation Plan, as selected by the Council. These reports will provide the basis for review of management actions taken within each jurisdiction over more than one year to meet the objectives of the Implementation Plan and will assess the efficacy of those actions in addressing the overall objectives of NASCO and in particular to conserve and restore salmon stocks.

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Suggested Changes to Conditions for Attendance by Observers at NASCO Meetings

Condition 4:

Interventions at NASCO meetings by accredited NGOs shall be in accordance with the following:

- Opening statements may be made by NGOs at the Opening Session of the Council. In addition, the accredited NGO chairperson and/or designee may each make a five-minute statement at the Opening Session of each Commission meeting;
- The President of the Council or Chairman of each Commission may recognise requests for the floor by the accredited NGO chairperson and/or designee on any agenda item under discussion before and after debate by the Parties on that item.;
- During sessions that are defined as “Special Sessions” by the Council, any representative(s) of the accredited NGOs may make interventions.

Condition 10:

Observer status shall apply to all plenary sessions of the Council and the Commissions, whether they be at the Annual Meeting or at intersessional meetings. The Council or Commissions shall solicit NGO and other stakeholder input to meetings of working groups and other subsidiary bodies as appropriate.

NSTF(06)12

Review Process for Implementation Plans and Related Special Sessions

To implement the review process envisaged in Decisions 21 and 22 of Document CNL(05)49 and related documents, it is recommended that an *ad hoc* Review Group should be established as follows:

1. Functions

- a. Review and provide feedback to the President on the adequacy of Implementation Plans prepared by the Parties or relevant jurisdictions.
- b. Review and analyse reports to be presented at Special Sessions chaired by the President. Develop points to be raised during these Special Sessions and assist discussions. Prepare a short report of the Special Session for the President that contains appropriate suggestions.

2. Composition

The Council would set up the *ad hoc* Review Group to run the review process. The Group would be chaired by the Secretariat and would include representatives from the following:

- Denmark in respect of either the Faroe Islands or Greenland (but not both);
- The remaining Parties to NASCO – 2 persons (to the extent possible reflecting balance among the membership and appropriate expertise);
- The Standing Scientific Committee;
- Accredited NGO representatives – 2 persons (ideally one NGO from Europe and one from North America).

Parties/entities represented on the Group would nominate persons (not usually the Heads of Delegations) to undertake the work necessary for the review. Representation on the *ad hoc* Review Group would rotate among Parties as appropriate. Such persons would operate in their expert capacity and not as representatives of their respective governments.

3. Process and Timing

- a. The members of the *ad hoc* Review Group would receive all the Parties' reports for the Special Session at least one month before the start of the Council meeting.
- b. The *ad hoc* Review Group should communicate intersessionally with a view to reaching consensus on the points to be raised during the Special Session.
- c. To the extent possible, the *ad hoc* Review Group should communicate questions it intends to raise during the Special Session to the respective Parties at least one week prior to the start of the Council Meeting so that the Parties have the opportunity to formulate considered responses.

- d. The Council will consider any suggestions resulting from the work of the *ad hoc* Review Group and the President and take action as appropriate.
- e. The proposed schedule of activities follows below.

Proposed Schedule of Activities

2006 Annual Meeting

- A Special Session will be held during which the Parties present progress toward development of their draft Implementation Plans. This Special Session will provide Parties with the opportunity to compare experiences in development of their Implementation Plans and to receive feedback on their progress to date. Based on the experience of the Parties in developing their plans, and the feedback received during the Special Sessions, there may need to be changes to the draft guidelines for the preparation of the Implementation Plans.
- The Council will establish an *ad hoc* Review Group to conduct a review of the Implementation Plans intersessionally. This group should be established at the earliest opportunity during the Annual Meeting, and prior to the Special Session.

October 2006

- Revised Implementation Plans are submitted by the Parties to NASCO.

November 2006 – March 2007

- Review Group examines the Implementation Plans submitted by the Parties and prepares a report to submit to the President and the Parties in advance of the Annual Meeting.

2007 Annual Meeting

- Parties submit first Annual Report under their Implementation Plans;
- Parties review the report from the *ad hoc* Review Group on Implementation Plans;
- The Council will establish an *ad hoc* Review Group for Focus Area 1 (either fisheries management or habitat or aquaculture, introductions and transfers) in combination with a Special Session at the 2008 Annual Meeting.

2008 Annual Meeting

- Parties submit second Annual Report under their Implementation Plans;
- Parties submit report for Focus Area 1 Special Session at least 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting;
- Review process for Special Session on Focus Area 1;
- The Council will establish an *ad hoc* Review Group for Focus Area 2 in combination with a Special Session at the 2009 Annual Meeting.

2009 Annual Meeting

- Parties submit third Annual Report under their Implementation Plans;

- Parties submit report for Focus Area 2 Special Session at least 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting;
- Review process for Special Session on Focus Area 2;
- The Council will establish an *ad hoc* Review Group for Focus Area 3 in combination with a Special Session at the 2010 Annual Meeting.

2010 Annual Meeting

- Parties submit fourth Annual Report under their Implementation Plans;
- Parties submit report for Focus Area 3 Special Session at least 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting;
- Review process for Special Session on Focus Area 3;
- The Council will establish an *ad hoc* Review Group for the new 5-year Implementation Plans in combination with a Special Session at the 2011 Annual Meeting.

2011 Annual Meeting

- Parties submit fifth Annual Report under their Implementation Plans;
- Parties submit revised Implementation Plans at least 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting;
- Review process for Special Session on new Implementation Plans.