



Agenda item 6.1  
For decision

**Council**

**CNL(16)13**

***Report of the Meeting of the Implementation Plan/Annual Progress Report  
Review Group***



## **CNL(16)13**

### ***Report of the Meeting of the Implementation Plan/Annual Progress Report Review Group***

**Ryldges Kensington Hotel, London, UK  
20 and 21 April 2016**

#### **1. Opening of the Meeting**

- 1.1 The Chairman of the Review Group, Mr Ted Potter (European Union), opened the meeting and welcomed members of the Review Group to London. He indicated that the purpose of the Implementation Plans (IPs) is to provide details of the measures to be taken by Parties/jurisdictions to implement NASCO's agreements and that the second cycle of plans sought information on the actions to be taken over a five year period (2013-2018) with clearly identifiable measurable outcomes. The main task before the Review Group was to evaluate the 2016 Annual Progress Reports (APRs) under these IPs to ensure that Parties/jurisdictions had provided a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating the actions detailed in their IPs and of the other information requested in the APRs. The 2016 APRs are the third under the current IPs and, as such, we are now more than half way through the period covered by the Implementation Plans. It would be important, therefore, that the Review Group critically evaluate the progress made to date.
- 1.2 Katrine Kaergaard was not able to serve on the Review Group and her place was taken by Áki Johansen. Paddy Gargan, Paul Knight, Ted Potter (Chairman), Rory Saunders and Sue Scott also participated in the meeting. The NASCO Secretary coordinated the work of the Group.

#### **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

- 2.1 The Review Group adopted its Agenda, IP(16)2 (Annex 1).

#### **3. Review of the Terms of Reference and Consideration of Working Methods**

- 3.1 The primary purpose of APRs is to provide details of:
  - any changes to the management regime for salmon and consequent changes to the IP;
  - actions that have been taken under the IP in the previous year;
  - significant changes to the status of stocks and a report on catches; and
  - actions taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.
- 3.2 The Council had agreed (see CNL(12)44) that the purpose of the evaluation of the APRs is to ensure that Parties/jurisdictions have provided a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating the actions detailed in their IPs and have provided the information required under the Convention. Where the Review Group identified shortcomings in the APRs, it had been asked to develop a list of questions to be sent to

the Party/jurisdiction concerned. In 2014, Parties/jurisdictions had responded to the Review Group's questions at the Annual Meeting and had provided written responses to the questions after that meeting. However, for the 2015 APRs, the Council had agreed that Parties/jurisdictions should provide written responses to the questions in advance of the 2015 Annual Meeting so that these could be distributed and discussed during a Special Session of the Council. This arrangement had worked well and the Council had asked that it be continued for the 2016 evaluations.

### *Working Methods*

- 3.3 The Review Group adopted the same working methods as it had used at its meetings in 2013, 2014 and 2015. These are described in document CNL(15)12. In summary, the Review Group continued to adopt the following 'ground rules' in undertaking its 2016 evaluations:
- (a) initial reviewers were appointed for each APR (mainly the same reviewers as for the IPs and previous APR evaluations) and asked to lead the discussion within the Group and to produce an initial evaluation of each APR. This included an assessment of progress against each of the actions in the IP and the reporting on: new initiatives or achievements for salmon conservation and management; stock status and new factors affecting salmon abundance; catch statistics; and the additional information required under the Convention;
  - (b) in reporting the evaluations, the initial reviewers remained anonymous but in the event that one or more members of the Review Group did not agree with a particular aspect or aspects of the evaluation, the report would indicate that there were dissenting views without disclosing which members of the Group expressed the dissenting views unless they wished to be identified;
  - (c) while the Group drew on information in the IPs, it only commented on the information presented in the APRs;
  - (d) because not all Parties/jurisdictions were represented on the Group, it was agreed that a member of the Review Group from a NASCO Party/jurisdiction whose APR was being reviewed would not be present during the initial review of that report. The members of the Group were appointed by the Council to represent NASCO, not their Party/Organisation.
- 3.4 For each APR, the Review Group assessed whether satisfactory responses had been provided on:
- any changes to the IP, new initiatives and significant changes in stock status;
  - the provision of complete catch data;
  - progress made on each action; and
  - other returns required under the Convention.
- 3.5 When all evaluations were complete, a consistency check was undertaken of all the assessments. As with the 2015 review, the template used for the evaluations provided a general assessment of the APR in terms of whether it provided a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating the actions in the IPs, a more detailed commentary on progress on each of the actions (relating to management of salmon

fisheries, habitat protection and restoration, and aquaculture and related activities) and a list of questions to be sent to the Parties/jurisdictions for response, in writing, prior to the Annual Meeting.

#### **4. Progress report on receipt of Implementation Plans and evaluation of any new IPs**

##### *Overview of the IP evaluations*

- 4.1 In its report to the Council's Thirty-Second (2015) Annual Meeting, the Review Group had noted that it had reviewed 18 IPs and, of these, 11 were considered to be satisfactory. The Review Group had considered that the following IPs contained clear omissions or inadequacies: Canada; Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) - Faroe Islands; EU - Spain (Asturias); EU - Spain (Cantabria); EU - Spain (Galicia); EU - UK (Scotland); and the Russian Federation.
- 4.2 For those jurisdictions that have salmon farming, the Review Group had recognised that providing quantitative data to demonstrate progress towards the international goals for sea lice and containment (questions 4.2 and 4.3 in the IP template, respectively) was challenging. However, the Group had expressed the opinion that the IPs for all Parties/jurisdictions with salmon farming should present quantitative data in a transparent manner to demonstrate progress made over the period of the IP towards the international goals for sea lice and containment rather than describing only the management measures in place. The Review Group had recommended that where this information had not been provided in the IPs, it should be reported through the APRs or, if that was not feasible, prior to the start of the next IP cycle.
- 4.3 The Group had emphasised that a score of '1' on an IP simply meant that a satisfactory answer/information had been provided and it did not mean that the Party/jurisdiction concerned was necessarily meeting NASCO guidelines or agreements. In some cases, responses were considered to be satisfactory even when the response was incomplete, provided that an action had been identified to begin to address any major shortcoming.

##### *Evaluation of new IPs*

- 4.4 Following the Review Group's 2015 meeting and prior to NASCO's Thirty-Second (2015) Annual Meeting, an Implementation Plan was received for EU - France, CNL(15)39rev. It had been submitted to the Secretariat as a partial plan to be further developed and it did not include identification of any threats/challenges in relation to aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics and, as a consequence, any relevant actions. It had not, therefore, been reviewed but the Review Group welcomes this contribution. Although it has not conducted a formal review, the Review Group noted that the IP appeared to be generally satisfactory and encourages EU - France to complete its plan without further delay so that it can be fully evaluated by the Review Group. The Secretary was asked to write to the Head of the EU delegation to ask that the IP be completed and providing some initial feedback on areas where some clarification of the information provided would be helpful.

### *Changes to IPs since 2015 Review Group meeting*

- 4.5 It is the Council's intention that IPs apply for a period of five years (2013 - 2018), and generally require no annual modification unless circumstances change significantly. At its 2014 Annual Meeting, the Council had asked that where a Party/jurisdiction had changed its IP, it should send the revised IP to the Secretariat no later than 1 December each year. Since the Council's 2015 Annual Meeting, revised IPs had been received from EU - Germany, CNL(15)58, EU - Spain (Galicia), CNL(15)59 and the USA, CNL(15)60. These revised IPs are available on the NASCO website at [www.nasco.int/implementation\\_plans\\_cycle2.html](http://www.nasco.int/implementation_plans_cycle2.html). The Review Group did not re-evaluate these IPs but it noted that the changes made to them were mainly of a minor editorial nature. In the case of the USA, some information that had previously been included in section 1.6 of an earlier version of the IP on the extent of salmonid aquaculture was reinstated and two additional rivers had been included under Action F4 in the IP for EU - Spain (Galicia).
- 4.6 At the time of the Review Group's meeting, an IP had still not been received for EU - Portugal and this is a concern to the Review Group given the significant challenges facing salmon managers in the southern part of the species' range. It is important that Portugal be encouraged to report on the measures being taken to safeguard the resource in accordance with NASCO agreements and guidelines.
- 4.7 The Review Group again highlighted that evaluating the progress made on actions was very difficult when the action in the IP was vague or imprecise and that this should be addressed in the next reporting cycle (see section 7 below). Notwithstanding this shortcoming in a number of IPs, the Review Group considered that there had been an overall improvement in the 2013 - 2018 IPs compared with the first cycle, not least because many include measurable outcomes and the amount of information provided was more amenable to evaluation. Furthermore, the Group welcomes the progress made by some jurisdictions in contributing to this reporting process for the first time.

## **5. Evaluation of the 2016 Annual Progress Reports and development of feedback to the Parties/jurisdictions**

### *Overview of the 2015 Annual Progress Report Evaluations*

- 5.1 Last year, the Review Group had noted that evaluating the progress made on actions in the APRs was very difficult when the descriptions of the planned actions in the IP were vague or imprecise. It had also indicated that Parties/jurisdictions should not rely on links to information on the internet in their APRs but should provide a brief, stand-alone summary of the progress made. The Review Group had also noted that a number of the 2015 APRs had provided similar information to that provided in 2014. Overall, the Review Group had considered that the most common fault with the information provided on progress with actions was a lack of quantitative information on what has been achieved and/or what the results have been. The Council had, therefore, asked that all Parties/jurisdictions address this in future APRs.

*2016 Annual Progress Report Evaluations*

- 5.2 The 2016 APR template had been issued to all Parties/jurisdictions by the Secretariat on 15 January 2016. The Council had asked that the APRs be completed and returned to the Secretariat by 1 April 2016 for critical evaluation by the Review Group. As requested by the Council, the Secretariat had included the ‘Description of Actions’ and ‘Expected Outcomes’ in the APR template for each Party/jurisdiction using the text from the most recent versions of the IPs. Last year, the Review Group had noted that some Parties/jurisdictions had made changes to these fields in completing the APR template resulting in differences between the APR and the IP. To address this issue, the Secretariat had made these fields non-editable in the template before issuing the 2016 APR template to the Parties/jurisdictions for completion. Furthermore, as requested by the Council, the Secretary had provided some examples of good practice in completing the 2015 APR template as highlighted in the Review Group’s 2015 report, CNL(15)12, in order to assist Parties/jurisdictions in completing their 2016 APR. The Council had also highlighted that timely reporting was essential if the evaluations were to be fair and balanced.
- 5.3 Eighteen APRs were submitted in 2016, 14 of which had been received by the deadline of 1 April. No proposals to amend the IPs in 2016 had been highlighted. The Review Group evaluated the following APRs:

<b>Party/jurisdiction</b>	<b>Document No.</b>	<b>Date APR received by Secretariat</b>	<b>Proposed amendments to IP in 2016?</b>
Canada	CNL(16)38	14 April 2016	No
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) - Faroe Islands	CNL(16)34	1 April 2016	No
Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) - Greenland	CNL(16)21	18 March 2016	No
EU - Denmark	CNL(16)35	5 April 2016	No
EU - Finland	CNL(16)31	31 March 2016	No
EU - France			
EU - Germany	CNL(16)22	18 March 2016	No
EU - Ireland	CNL(16)36	8 April 2016	No
EU - Portugal			
EU - Spain (Asturias)	CNL(16)27	31 March 2016	No
EU - Spain (Cantabria)	CNL(16)28	31 March 2016	No
EU - Spain (Galicia)	CNL(16)29	31 March 2016	No
EU - Spain (Navarra)	CNL(16)30	31 March 2016	No
EU - Sweden	CNL(16)32	31 March 2016	No
EU - UK (England and Wales)	CNL(16)24	30 March 2016	No
EU - UK (Northern Ireland)	CNL(16)37	8 April 2016	No
EU - UK (Scotland)	CNL(16)26	31 March 2016	No
Norway	CNL(16)33	1 April 2016	No
Russian Federation	CNL(16)25	30 March 2016	No
United States	CNL(16)23	29 March 2016	No

- 5.4 Where the Review Group considered that there were shortcomings in an APR, the Council had requested that it develop a list of questions to be sent to the Party/jurisdiction concerned by 1 May. In some instances, the Review Group also asked questions where it felt that further information on the action would be helpful. The Review Group agreed that the questions should be sent to the Parties/jurisdictions by the Secretary as soon as possible after its meeting and that each Party/jurisdiction be asked to respond in writing no later than 15 May so that their responses can be circulated prior to, and discussed at, the Special Session scheduled to be held during the 2016 Annual Meeting.
- 5.5 The Review Group's evaluations of the 2016 APRs are contained in document IP(16)3 (Annex 2). All the evaluations were agreed unanimously by the Review Group. The Review Group used the following format in presenting its evaluations:
- a paragraph (shown in bold italics) summarising its overall assessment of the APR in terms of whether it provided a clear account of progress and noting any shortcomings;
  - a paragraph highlighting interesting developments or challenges related to implementation of NASCO's agreements and guidelines;
  - paragraphs summarising the actions taken in relation to management of fisheries, habitat protection and restoration and aquaculture and related activities; and
  - a list of questions where clarification is being sought from the Party/jurisdiction about the information (or lack of information) provided in the APR.
- 5.6 For some APRs, evaluating the progress made on actions was very difficult because the descriptions of the planned actions in the IP were vague or imprecise. The Review Group had previously highlighted such shortcomings and has noted this difficulty in some of its evaluations. The Review Group noted that the APRs for several Parties/jurisdictions continued to lack a clear account of progress in implementing and evaluating some, or all, of the actions detailed in their IPs, despite the further guidance provided on completing the template and the provision of examples of good practice. These reports either included:
- one or more gaps in the 'Progress on Action to Date';
  - very little information or quantitative data to demonstrate progress; and/or
  - comment(s) bearing no clear relationship to the proposed action(s).
- 5.7 The Review Group also noted that a number of the 2016 APRs had provided similar information to that provided in 2014 and 2015, even when the Review Group had previously sought clarification or further detail in its questions.
- 5.8 These shortcomings are of concern to the Review Group given that improving commitment to NASCO agreements was a key aspect of the 'Next Steps' and External Performance reviews and as the second reporting cycle is now 60% completed. When preparing future APRs, Parties/jurisdictions are again reminded to provide evidence of progress made to address the action in the current year or to indicate that no further progress was made, taking account of previous questions asked by the Review Group.



- 5.9 The Review Group prepared a summary table (Table 1 below) to provide an overview of the number of actions in each IP/APR, the progress with their implementation and the extent to which that progress was reported in 2016 (i.e. Not started, Ongoing (with clear progress report), Ongoing (without clear progress report), Completed (with clear progress report), Completed (without clear progress report)) for each Party/jurisdiction. This table should be interpreted with care taking account of the explanatory footnotes.
- 5.10 The Review Group is concerned that, for some Parties/jurisdictions, actions have not yet started or where actions are ongoing there has either been no report of progress or the reporting is unclear. The Review Group also experienced considerable difficulties in interpreting the progress in some APRs because of the continuing use of links to websites and references to publications. As previously indicated, the APRs should be stand-alone documents that allow progress to be assessed and only provide links or references as a means to provide access to additional information for those wishing to learn more. Overall, the Review Group again considered that the most common fault with the information provided continues to be a lack of quantitative evidence on the extent of the progress made and/or what the results have been. All Parties/jurisdictions are asked to address this in future APRs.
- 5.11 If the evaluation process is to work effectively, and be fair and equitable, clearer and more detailed reporting will be required in the 2017 APRs for a number of EU Member States and jurisdictions. These are: EU - Finland, EU - Spain (Asturias), EU - Spain (Cantabria), EU - Spain (Galicia), EU - UK (Northern Ireland) and EU - UK (Scotland). The Review Group wishes to particularly commend EU - Sweden for the clarity of its APR on which it had no questions.
- 5.12 The Review Group noted that a number of Parties/jurisdictions reported some interesting and useful developments and challenges in addressing NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines, including:
- **Canada:** publication of the report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Atlantic Salmon which contains 61 recommendations including plans to update the Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Policy;
  - **Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) - Greenland:** implementation of new monitoring and control measures and establishment of a quota for the entire fishery in 2015;
  - **EU - Finland:** conclusion of negotiations with Norway on regulatory measures for the Tenjoki (Tana River) that will reduce fishing pressure by 30%;
  - **EU - Spain (Navarra):** establishment of a TAC for MSW salmon. Funding has been obtained for a LIFE project that should result in improvements to river connectivity;
  - **EU - Sweden:** as a result of a measure introduced in 2014 there was no coastal mixed-stock fishing in 2015;
  - **EU - UK (England & Wales):** development of a five-point approach in England aimed at addressing pressures faced by salmon throughout their life-cycle;
  - **EU - UK (Northern Ireland):** legislation to manage exploitation and prevent harvest of salmon from rivers in the DCAL area that are not meeting their management targets. Farm origin genetic signals were found in between 2.6% and

6.7% of juveniles sampled across ten rivers in Northern Ireland and there was evidence of second generation back-crosses between farmed and wild salmon, albeit at a low level;

- **EU - UK (Scotland):** prohibition on killing of salmon beyond estuary limits for three years from 2016 and killing of Atlantic salmon in inland waters will be managed on an annual basis by categorising fishery districts by their conservation status. A requirement to develop a Conservation Plan for salmon stocks irrespective of their conservation status;
- **Norway:** salmon catches in rivers that are being limed have increased from about 10 tonnes in the 1980s to 40 – 50 tonnes today and account for 10 – 14% of the total catch in Norwegian rivers. Triploid salmon are being reared by several commercial salmon farmers;
- **Russian Federation:** a large kill (700 adult salmon; about 10% of the run) in the Kola River believed to be due to Ulcerative Dermal Necrosis (UDN);
- **USA:** a new initiative for endangered species including Atlantic salmon entitled ‘Species in the Spotlight: Survive to Thrive’ and a new action plan aimed at reducing threats and stabilising population declines in endangered Atlantic salmon populations.

#### *Parties/jurisdictions not submitting APRs*

- 5.13 No APRs had been received from EU - France or EU - Portugal by the time the Review Group met to undertake its evaluations. The lack of some APRs is a serious concern to the Group because the purpose of IPs and APRs is to provide a simple and transparent approach for reporting on the implementation of NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines as agreed under the ‘Next Steps’ process and on actions taken in accordance with the Convention. The current IPs cover the period 2013 - 2018 so the 2016 APRs might be expected to represent the completion of 60% of the proposed actions. Timely, complete and comprehensive reporting is important if the evaluation process is to be thorough and consistent.

#### *Improvements to the APR template*

- 5.14 The Review Group welcomed the improvements made to the 2016 reporting template but, as noted above, several APRs still contain links to websites or references to publications rather than a stand-alone, clear report on progress. While the guidance in the 2016 template at the start of each section dealing with the progress reports states that ‘*While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group*’ this could be further clarified both in the template and the covering letter issued by the Secretariat to request completion of the APRs. The Review Group also recommends that the ‘Current Status of Action’ field in the template be made a choice field with only three options (‘Not started’, ‘Ongoing’, ‘Completed for Current Year’ and ‘Completed’) to avoid confusion about the use of this field.

## **6. Arrangements for presenting the Group's report to the Council**

- 6.1 The Review Group agreed that the Chairman would present its report to the Council during the Special Session at the Thirty-Third (2016) Annual Meeting. The Group agreed that this should briefly summarise the Group's working methods and provide an overview of the evaluations in terms of completeness and timeliness of reporting and progress to date. The circulation of the responses to the Group's questions ahead of the Annual Meeting should facilitate discussion at the meeting involving all Parties and NGOs.

## **7. Recommendations for the third round of Implementation Plans**

- 7.1 At its 2015 meeting, the Review Group discussed changes that might be made to the next (third) cycle of IPs and APR s that will commence in 2019 so that these might be considered with a view to improving the effectiveness of future reporting. These were as follows:

- many of the actions that were planned by Parties/jurisdictions had been vague or unclear making it difficult to assess progress. In other cases, actions had little bearing on NASCO agreements or guidelines, even when the Party/jurisdiction was not abiding by the terms of the agreements and guidelines. In the next round of IPs, it may be necessary to include specific topic areas on which Parties/jurisdictions would be expected to provide an action if they do not demonstrate that they are fully compliant with NASCO agreements and guidelines;
- greater efforts should be made in the next round of IPs to ensure that all actions are clearly and concisely described. Any IPs that do not do so should not be accepted by the Review Group but returned to the Party/jurisdiction for revision;
- there may be a need to include some standard questions in the template for the next round of IPs with a view to ensuring that such information is provided by all Parties/jurisdictions (e.g. relating to sea lice levels and containment within marine salmon farms).

- 7.2 The Review Group noted that all the Members of the West Greenland Commission had agreed to apply the six tenets for effective management of an Atlantic salmon fishery in order to evaluate the monitoring and control measures applying to their salmon fisheries. These tenets have already been applied to the salmon fishery at West Greenland and led to the adoption of an Updated Plan for Implementation of Monitoring and Control Measures in the Salmon Fishery at West Greenland, progress on which has been reported in the 2016 APR for Greenland, CNL(16)21. There had been some discussions within the West Greenland Commission as to whether the six tenets might be applied more widely to include all NASCO Parties/jurisdictions. If that is done, consideration might be given to including a section in the new IPs dealing with the monitoring and control elements covered by the six tenets.

## **8. Membership of the Review Group**

- 8.1 Under the Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress, CNL(12)44, the Review Group comprises one representative from Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), three representatives from the other Parties (preferably one from North America and two

from Europe), two representatives of the NGOs (preferably one from Europe and one from North America) and one scientific representative from NASCO's Standing Scientific Committee (SSC). The Council had recognised that it would be desirable, wherever possible, that those appointed to serve on the Review Group do so for the entire reporting cycle covered by the Implementation Plans.

- 8.2 The Chairman indicated that he would be retiring after NASCO's 2016 Annual Meeting and would not, therefore, be able to participate in the future work of the Review Group. The Review Group noted that Ted Potter had been the SSC's representative but that the Chairman of the SSC, Paddy Gargan, also serves on the Review Group although appointed by a Party. The Council would, therefore, need to appoint a new member of the Review Group to replace Ted Potter, either as a representative of the Parties or the SSC (or possibly two new members if the Council decided to fill all the available places).
- 8.3 Sue Scott, one of the two NGO representatives on the Review Group, also indicated that she was retiring and would not be able to participate in the Group's work in the future. The Group noted that it would be a matter for the NGOs to nominate a replacement.
- 8.4 The Review Group thanked Ted Potter and Sue Scott for their contributions to the review process and Ted Potter for his chairmanship of the Group's 2015 and 2016 meetings.
- 8.5 The Review Group appointed Rory Saunders as its new Chairman.

## **9. Report of the Meeting**

- 9.1 The Review Group agreed a report of its meeting.

## **10. Any other business**

- 10.1 There was no other business.

## **11. Close of the Meeting**

- 11.1 The Chairman thanked the members of the Review Group for their contribution to the meeting and wished them a safe journey home. He undertook to liaise with the Secretary so that the Group's questions for the Parties/jurisdictions could be sent out at the earliest opportunity, hopefully so the responses can be provided by mid-May.

**Table 1: Summary overview of progress on the actions reported in the APRs**

		Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)			European Union																
	Canada	Faroe Islands	Greenland	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany	Ireland	Portugal	Spain - Asturias	Spain - Cantabria	Spain - Galicia	Spain - Navarra	Sweden	UK - England & Wales	UK - Northern Ireland	UK - Scotland	Norway	Russian Federation	USA	
<b>Actions Related to the Management of Salmon Fisheries</b>																					
F1	OG	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG		OG	OG		OG-NP	NS	NS	NS	OG	OG	OG	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG	
F2	OG		OG	OG-NP	OG		OG	OG		OG-NP	NS	NS	OG	OG	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG-NP	OG	OG	
F3	OG			OG-NP				OG			NS	OG-NP	OG	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG	OG-NP	OG	OG	
F4	OG										NS	OG-NP	OG	CD	OG	OG-NP	OG-NP	OG	CD		
F5	OG										OG			OG	OG		OG-NP				
F6														OG							
F7														OG							
F8														OG							
F9														OG							
F10														OG							
F11														OG							
<b>Actions Related to Habitat Protection and Restoration</b>																					
H1	OG		OG	OG-NP	OG-NP		OG	OG-NP		OG-NP	OG-NP	NS	NS	OG	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG	OG	OG	
H2	OG			OG-NP			OG	OG-NP		OG-NP	OG-NP	OG-NP	NS	CD	OG	OG-NP	OG	OG	OG	OG	
H3	OG			OG-NP			OG	OG-NP		CD-NP	OG	OG		OG	OG	OG-NP	OG	OG		OG	
H4								OG-NP			NS	OG-NP		CD	OG	OG	OG	OG		OG	
H5														OG		OG					
H6																OG					
<b>Actions Related to Aquaculture and Associated Activities</b>																					
A1	OG-NP	OG-NP			OG		OG	OG-NP			NS			OG	OG	OG	OG-NP	OG-NP	OG-NP	OG	
A2	OG-NP				OG-NP		OG	OG						OG	OG		OG-NP	OG	OG	OG	
A3	OG							OG							OG		OG-NP	OG	OG	OG	
A4	OG																	OG		OG	

**Key:** NS = Not Started; OG = Ongoing - with clear progress report; OG-NP = Ongoing - without clear progress report; CD = Completed - with clear progress report; CD-NP = Completed - without clear progress report.

**Note:** The table above is intended to show for each Party/jurisdiction which actions in the Implementation Plan have been initiated and are ongoing, which have yet to commence, and which are completed. It should be noted that the Implementation Plans specify the planned timescales for implementing the actions and these will differ, with not all scheduled to commence in 2013 and some continuing beyond 2018. The scope of the work under each action will also differ. In some cases, an action to address a particular threat/challenge might comprise a number of different elements and although the action is shown as ongoing it does not mean that all elements have commenced or conversely that some are not completed. Some actions that are shown as ongoing were reported as completed for 2015 but are scheduled to occur annually during the period of the Implementation Plan. There is also a wide range in the number of actions in each Implementation Plan.



**IP(16)2**

***Meeting of the  
Implementation Plan/Annual Progress Report Review Group***

***Agenda***

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Review of the Terms of Reference and Consideration of Working Methods
4. Progress report on receipt of Implementation Plans and evaluation of any new IPs
5. Evaluation of the 2016 Annual Progress Reports and development of feedback to the Parties/jurisdictions
6. Arrangements for presenting the Group's report to the Council
7. Recommendations for the third round of Implementation Plans
8. Membership of the Review Group
9. Report of the Meeting
10. Any other business
11. Close of the Meeting





**IP(16)3**

***Evaluation of Annual Progress Reports and Questions from the Review Group to Parties/jurisdictions***

**Canada, CNL(16)38**

***The Implementation Plan identifies 12 proposed actions but, as previously reported by the Review Group, the precise activities that were planned are unclear, making it difficult to evaluate the progress made. Nevertheless, the APR provides generally clear and comprehensive reports to address the topic areas covered by each action, all of which are ongoing with some elements completed.***

The final report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Atlantic Salmon was issued in 2015. It included 61 recommendations on issues ranging from conservation and enforcement to working internationally within NASCO and with other partners to address fisheries which target Atlantic salmon of Canadian origin. The APR states that many of the recommendations have been addressed already while others are targeted for implementation in 2016-17. One recommendation of note that will be undertaken in 2016 is a review and revision of Canada's Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Policy with the aim of updating the policy's existing goals, approach to resource management and overall framework for conservation of the resource. In Quebec, new upper and lower reference points have been set for each river stock. Catch limits have been reduced, release of large salmon will be mandatory on rivers that do not reach the upper reference points, and fishing will be closed in rivers below the lower reference points. Changes have also been made to the Newfoundland and Labrador baitfish fishery to reduce salmon bycatch. Canada has met with France (in respect of St Pierre and Miquelon) and raised the question of its membership of NASCO.

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** DFO has initiated a process to update its Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Policy and expects to hold stakeholder consultations in 2016. A scientific review of stock reference points was published in 2015, and new harvest decision rules, are being implemented regionally. New management measures have been put in place in much of Canada (Action F1). New Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations came into force during 2015 (Action F2). The Nova Scotia Salmon Association liming project has continued, and the objective of increasing the pH (target pH of 5.5) and increasing production has been achieved; monitoring of juveniles and adult runs has continued and a full-time research scientist has been hired to expand the project (Action F3). Enforcement activities have been further enhanced in 2015 and over 6,000 fishers and 20,000 fishing sites have been checked (Action F4). Measures are in place to restrict the bycatch of salmon e.g. areas closed to use of gill nets and depth requirements for groundfish gill nets, and the implementation of these is continuing (Action F5).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** DFO has been working with its many partners to implement the Recovery Strategy for the Inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic salmon population; funding has been obtained from a range of sources and a number of projects initiated (Action H1). Work to enhance the protection of salmon from works, undertakings and activities that represent the greatest threats (Action H2) and to foster inter-jurisdictional discussions and collaborative activities (Action H3) are ongoing, but no new information for 2015 has been provided.

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** The new national Aquaculture Activities Regulations came into force during 2015 and require increased reporting by licence holders. Nova Scotia has released new Aquaculture Management Regulations, which *inter alia* allow for the establishment of Aquaculture Management Areas, increased reporting of elevated on-farm mortalities and use of treatment products. A review of the Integrated Pest Management Program for Sea Lice in New Brunswick has been completed; Performance Measures and sea lice management reports are released annually. Newfoundland and Labrador has adopted and implemented a Bay Management Area plan for salmon aquaculture in the Coast of Bays region (Action A1). Nova Scotia's new Aquaculture Management Regulations require finfish licence holders to include containment management in their Farm Management Plan and this must be audited annually by a third party and immediately following a reported breach. Marine cage site designs must also be approved by a qualified engineer before deployment. The Newfoundland and Labrador Code of Containment continues to be implemented as a condition of the aquaculture licence and the Province is currently evaluating a proposal to grow triploid (sterile) salmon as a means of growing European-strain fish in Newfoundland and Labrador without the potential for genetic interactions with wild stocks (Action A2). Canada's National Code on Introductions and Transfers of Aquatic Organisms was implemented at the end of 2015 to coincide with the full implementation of the National Aquatic Animal Health Program (Action A3). Canada has previously decided to permit the commercial production of transgenic Atlantic salmon in contained facilities and, in 2015, there were no known regulatory violations in relation to these activities (Action A4).

**Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

1. *How many of the recommendations from the report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Atlantic Salmon were addressed in 2015 and what important developments have resulted?*
2. *What are the plans for identifying critical marine habitat within the Bay of Fundy (Action H1)?*
3. *What measures will be taken to ensure that the proposal to rear triploid European strain salmon in Newfoundland and Labrador is consistent with the Williamsburg Resolution and NAC Protocols on Introductions and Transfers and that the risk of any adverse ecological impacts on the wild salmon stocks is minimal (Action A2)?*
4. *The Review Group considers that all Parties and jurisdictions with salmon farming should have presented quantitative data in a transparent manner in their Implementation Plans as a baseline for demonstrating progress towards meeting the international goals for sea lice and containment set out in the NASCO Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks. Summary data are requested to provide the baselines for Canadian salmon farming facilities (Actions A1 and A2).*

## **Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) - Faroe Islands, CNL(16)34**

*The Implementation Plan identifies only two proposed actions (there are no self-sustaining salmon populations in the Faroe Islands), and the APR provides a clear report on the progress made to address each action in 2015, both of which are ongoing.*

There was no salmon fishery at Faroes in the 2015/16 season. There is continuing interest in conducting a research fishery.

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** In 2015, NASCO's North-East Atlantic Commission agreed a Decision regarding the salmon fishery in Faroese waters in 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18, NEA(15)10. In accordance with this decision, and consistent with the advice from ICES, no salmon fishery took place in Faroese water in the 2015/16 season (Action A1).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** Because of the small size of the Faroese rivers, there is no historic record of any natural wild salmon population in Faroese rivers or fjords. Since there are no self-supporting wild salmon stocks in Faroese rivers, there are no actions in the Implementation Plan relating to habitat protection and restoration.

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** The Implementation Plan indicates that 25 marine farms produced 77 tonnes of salmon in 2012. During 2015, monitoring and enforcement by the Faroese Veterinary Authority continued and the APR indicates that had there been an issue with regard to sea lice and containment, these matters would have been dealt with in accordance with the regulatory procedures. A figure providing information on counts of sea lice on farmed salmon has been provided. Rearing of transgenic salmon farming is not allowed under the Veterinary Law (Action A1).

### **Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

- 1. The figure provided under Action A1 appears to show increased lice levels in salmon farms in late 2015. What sea lice thresholds are applied on salmon farms to trigger action to control sea lice, how many instances were there of farms breaching lice limits in 2015 and what action was taken (Action A1)?*
- 2. The Review Group considers that all Parties and jurisdictions with salmon farming should have presented quantitative data in a transparent manner in their Implementation Plans as a baseline for demonstrating progress towards meeting the international goals for sea lice and containment set out in the NASCO Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks. Summary data are requested to provide the baselines for containment levels at salmon farming facilities in the Faroe Islands.*

## **Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) - Greenland, CNL(16)21**

*The Implementation Plan identifies three proposed actions and the APR provides a clear report on the progress to address each of these actions, all of which are ongoing.*

The Review Group notes that the same estimate of unreported catch has been provided by Greenland since the 1990s (through ICES including in the APR).

In accordance with the Multi-Annual Regulatory Measure for Fishing for Salmon at West Greenland for 2015, 2016 and 2017, WGC(15)21, and the Updated Plan for Implementation of Monitoring and Control Measures in the Salmon Fishery at West Greenland, WGC(15)20, the following measures and initiatives were implemented in Greenland during 2015:

- Only designated fish factories will be authorised to accept landings of salmon;
- It is now a condition in the license that fishermen should allow samplers to take samples of their catches upon request;
- The NASCO brochure on sampling was issued with all the licenses, distributed to the open air markets and provided to the samplers;
- The Government of Greenland decided to delay the opening date of the fishing season to 15. August;
- For the first time a quota was set for the entire salmon fishery (45 tonnes).

The plan is to implement the remaining measures in the spring of 2016 and for some measures and initiatives the implementation process has already begun.

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** An extensive information campaign was undertaken to remind all fishermen of the need to report catches. A phone survey was conducted by the GFLK in an effort to improve the reporting for 2014 and 2015; this has increased awareness of the way to complete the reporting forms and provided additional information on catches (Action F1). A quota was set for the entire fishery (45 tonnes). The APR indicates that the provisional catch for 2015 was 58.4 tonnes (Action F2).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** Work in developing a protection plan for the Kapisillit River stock and the surrounding watershed ceased following the election in the Autumn of 2014 but the strategy to develop a biodiversity strategy for Greenland continues. A detailed report on biodiversity has been prepared and will be the basis for the strategy (Action H1).

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** There is no aquaculture in Greenland and consequently there are no proposed actions in the Implementation Plan.

### **Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

1. *Given that the provisional catch statistics indicate that the quota for the 2015 fishery of 45 tonnes was exceeded by 13.4 tonnes, what actions will be taken to improve control of the harvest (Action F2)?*

## European Union - Denmark, CNL(16)35

*The Implementation Plan identifies six proposed actions, all of which were on-going in 2015. The APR provides very little information on the progress to address each of these actions in 2015 and so more information is sought in the questions below. No progress reports have been provided for actions F1, F2 and F3. For the evaluation process to work effectively and be fair and equitable, the Review Group will require more detailed reporting on progress against each action in the 2017 APR.*

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** Denmark has continued to apply a national cormorant plan to regulate recruitment of cormorants where predation on salmonids is perceived to be a problem (Action F1). The by-catch of salmon and sea trout in fisheries in the Ringkøbing Fjord is being assessed (Action F2). Work is also underway to develop more reliable reference points for four wild salmon stocks in Denmark (Action F3). These actions are said to be ongoing, but no details of progress have been provided.

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** Several hundred obstructions to fish migration have been removed as part of a programme to improve access for salmon and sea trout (Action H1). Many habitat restoration projects are said to have been executed, but no further details have been provided (Action H2). Present and potential salmon production has been estimated for the Rivers Skjern and Ribe (in draft) as part of a study to identify and quantify potential salmon spawning and nursery habitats in newly accessible areas (Action H3). No further details of progress have been provided.

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** No actions were proposed in the Implementation Plan.

### **Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

1. *What action was taken in 2015 to reduce the mortality of salmonid smolts caused by cormorants (Action F1)?*
2. *What levels of by-catch of salmon and sea trout were observed in the Ringkøbing Fjord in 2015 (Action F2)?*
3. *What was the result of the assessment under the new management plan for 2013/2014 regarding whether reliable reference points can be established for Danish salmon rivers (Action F3)?*
4. *How much new habitat was made available to salmon by the removal of migratory obstructions in 2015 (Action H1)?*
5. *What activities were undertaken in 2015 to restore habitat in smaller streams from earlier canalisation, pipe-laying and dredging (Action H2)?*
6. *What action is planned to make use of the information on present and potential salmon production in the Rivers Skjern and Ribe (Action H3)?*

## European Union - Finland, CNL(16)31

*The Implementation Plan identifies only five proposed actions. The APR provides very little information on the progress to address the actions in 2015, all of which were ongoing, and so more information is sought in the questions below. This is particularly so for Action A2 where no report on progress has been provided and it would have been useful if quantitative information derived from the monitoring programme had been presented. For the evaluation process to work effectively and be fair and equitable, the Review Group will require more detailed reporting on progress against each action in the 2017 APR.*

The APR does not identify any major new initiatives or achievements for salmon conservation. However, the Review Group notes that the APR states that Finland and Norway have reached a conclusion on regulatory measures for salmon fishing in the Tenjoki (Tana River) that will result in a reduction in fishing pressure of 30%. Furthermore, a new Fishing Act that will provide better tools for management, including in tributaries of the Tenjoki and Näätämöjoki not covered by the bilateral agreements, entered into force on 1 January 2016.

The APR indicates that catch and release not applicable although it has previously been reported to be at a low level. The Review Group had previously noted that it will be important to ensure that reporting procedures are in place if catch and release increases in the future under any new fishing agreement.

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** The APR indicates that Finland and Norway have come to a conclusion on a new regulatory regime for the Tenjoki regulatory measures based on biological reference points and scientific assessments, including a reduction of fishing pressure of 30% (Action F1). Conservation limits have been established for nine tributary populations and the main stem of the Tenjoki; attainment has been assessed against these and bilateral cooperation with Norway is underway to define targets for more tributaries (Action F2).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** The Implementation Plan indicates that there are only minor habitat issues in the Atlantic salmon rivers in Finland. The APR indicates that guidance has been issued to road constructors to avoid the creation of barriers to migration and erosion and, in response to a previous question from the Review Group, Finland advised that no monitoring is undertaken or required to confirm that construction works have not harmed salmon habitat (Action H1).

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** A network of 24 disinfection stations has been set up and training of the personnel at these stations and at fishing license sales points has been undertaken in 2015 to prevent the spread of *Gyrodactylus salaris* (Action A1). No progress report was provided on the monitoring programme for escaped farm salmon in 2015 (Action A2).

### **Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

- 1. In the absence of a new bilateral agreement, were the measures introduced by local fishing right owners on the Tenjoki in 2015 considered to be effective and will these measures continue to apply in 2016 (Action F1)?*
- 2. The 2015 APR indicated that spawning targets had been set for 24 sites on the Tenjoki. The Review Group understands that attainment is now being assessed for nine tributaries and the main stem. What steps are being taken to assemble data to allow assessments for the remaining sites (Action F2)?*

3. *What are the plans and timeframes for developing new salmon fishing agreements for the Näätamönjoki (Action F1)?*
4. *Given that recommendations have been given to road constructors, but that monitoring is not undertaken, have any works been approved since last year that were not consistent with these recommendations (Action H1)?*
5. *No progress was reported on Action A2. What are the results of the monitoring programme for escaped farmed salmon in the Tenojoki in 2015 (Action A2)?*

## European Union - Germany, CNL(16)22

*The Implementation Plan identifies seven proposed actions and the APR provides a clear and comprehensive report on the progress made to address them in 2015; all were ongoing with one action partially completed. Detailed supplementary information is provided in appendices to the APR.*

The APR highlights a number of interesting new developments in 2015 including: evaluation of the effectiveness of fish protection devices that had been installed on two hydropower plants in 2014; installation of a Vaki counter in one tributary and evaluation of optical video monitors in two other tributaries); plans for new trials with calcein marking; planning for mapping of redds by local angling clubs; and genetic studies of salmon from the River Nette, a tributary of the Rhine, which indicate that most salmon were from British or Irish strains, but two fish originated from central Norway.

No estimate of unreported catch has been provided although it is recognised that bycatch and illegal catches occur. Catch and release is not practiced (salmon fisheries are prohibited in the Rhine).

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** An annual exchange of information among experts on the implementation and effectiveness of measures to reduce by-catches and illegal fishing is ongoing. A Dutch report on fishing activities on the coast indicates that most salmonids are caught near the Haringvliet sluices, particularly when gillnets are used close to the shore. However, the requirement to use mesh nets for shrimp and the introduction of a closed season for eels are expected to result in reduced catches of salmonids (Action F1). An interesting project is underway on part of the Agger River with the aim of developing a self-sustaining salmon population by gradually reducing the stocking. In 2015 stocking in this river ceased (Action F2).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** A programme is underway to maintain and restore good fish passage at 250 barrages on the rivers Rhine, Ems, Weser and Elbe. Of the 46 measures originally scheduled, only three had been constructed and so the strategy has been updated. The second phase commenced in 2016 and includes 77 projects of which 52 are already in the planning phase. Monitoring is ongoing at 12 fish passes (Action H1). The second Rhine River Basin Management Plan under the EU Water Framework Directive was published in 2015 and contains a description of measures for migrating fish and a list of obstacles to be modified by 2012. A new Federal programme was launched in 2015 to provide funding during 2016 - 2018 for ecological restoration including habitat restoration in the River Rhine. The first integrated LIFE project in Germany was launched in January 2016 with the aim of achieving 'good ecological status' in the River Lahn, a tributary of the Rhine (Action H2). There are plans to improve longitudinal connectivity at 134 sites on the river Elbe and its primary tributaries. Many of the measures to improve river connectivity under the first international management plan (2013 - 2015) have been fully implemented or initiated, but a new strategy has been developed for the second management period to 2021 drawing on experiences under the previous plan (Action H3).

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** The intention is to establish a separate locally adapted indigenous salmon populations in tributaries of the Rhine in North Rhine Westphalia and the successful trial operation of the Wild Salmon Centre Rhine-Sieg without the use of imported ova in 2014 continued in 2015. Kelt reconditioning at the LANUV NRW hatchery has been found to be ineffective and ceased in 2015 in favour of expansion of the captive broodstock programme (Action A1). A harmonised genetic monitoring programme for salmon in the Rhine catchment has



been agreed but its implementation requires clarification of funding and arrangements for storing samples (Action A2).

**Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

1. *What is the estimated harvest of salmon in the Dutch fisheries and are there any proposals for measures to address these harvests in the gill net fisheries close to the shore near the Haringvliet sluices (Action F1)?*

## European Union - Ireland, CNL(16)36

*The Implementation Plan identifies ten proposed actions but, as previously reported by the Review Group, the precise activities that were planned for some actions are unclear making it difficult to evaluate progress through the APRs. Nevertheless, the APR provides clear and comprehensive reports on progress to address some actions in 2015 with useful quantitative data to demonstrate progress on monitoring programmes etc. However, it is unclear what progress has been made in relation to the four actions on habitat protection and restoration.*

Fisheries regulations and byelaws regulating recreational and commercial fisheries were updated for the 2015 fisheries. A new National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development was published for consultation in 2015. It reviews the current status of farmed salmon production in Ireland and the potential for sectoral growth.

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** Enforcement activities related to illegal fishing are well described for 2015 including man hours spent, number of nets seized, number of on-the-spot fines issued and number of prosecutions (Action F1). Efforts are being made to improve catch reporting through the use of national carcass tagging and logbooks. In recent years, all commercial salmon fishermen have made a catch return; the percentage of recreational fishermen that reported in 2015 was the same as in 2014. All anglers who do not return logbooks are written to and a proportion taken to court; an electronic licence application system is in place (Action F2). A national reporting mechanism for fish counter data and validation has been in place since 2014. Information from 32 counters (an increase of 11 since 2011) is used to inform the current assessment (Action F3).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** The APR indicates that there is an overall improvement of water quality due to improved agricultural practices and that seriously polluted river sites have been virtually eliminated, although it is noted that the 2015 target is unlikely to have been met (Action H1). The Forestry Act passed into law in October 2014 and a GIS-based management system is being used to ensure that forestry activities are approved only following detailed environmental consultation (Action H2). Efforts to improve waste water treatment are ongoing with upgrading focusing on those facilities where improvements are most needed. Inspections have shown an improvement from 52% compliance in the first year of the plan to 79% by February 2015 after the remedial works were undertaken (Action H3). The APR indicates that stringent action is being taken by the Irish authorities to enforce Treatment Trigger Levels for sea lice, including accelerated harvests and early fallowing of sites (Action H4). However, it is unclear from the APR what progress was made on actions H1, H2, H3 and H4 during 2015.

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** A pan-European study, 'Prevent Escapes', indicated that the level of escapes in Ireland is low in comparison to other countries assessed. The APR indicates that there were no recorded incidents of escapes in 2015 (Action A1). On-farm sea lice checks together with alternative approaches to complement husbandry and medicine treatments and rigorous regulatory oversight are reported to have led to improved sea lice levels throughout the Irish salmon farming industry. In 2015, for farmed salmon in the first year at sea, 97% of inspections were below the Treatment Trigger Level compared to 94% in 2014 and 100% in 2013. The corresponding figures for one-sea-winter salmon were 78%, 71% and 82%. (Action A2). Mortality due to Amoebic Gill Disease is reported to have decreased significantly in the last 12 months due to weekly monitoring and early intervention. Phytoplankton and zooplankton damage continues to be problematic in certain bays but early intervention in relation to fish husbandry and management is reported to have helped (Action A3).

**Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

1. *What quantitative information can be provided to demonstrate progress made in 2015 on the four actions relating to habitat protection and restoration (Actions H1, H2, H3 and H4)?*
2. *What data are available to support the statement that the level of escapes is low compared to other countries (Action A1)?*
3. *What action is taken when sea lice thresholds are exceeded over an extended period (Actions H4 and A2)?*
4. *What evidence can be provided to demonstrate that the incidence of diseases in salmon farming has declined and how has this been achieved (Action A3)?*
5. *Have there been further outbreaks of Pancreas Disease (PD) in 2015, following those reported in the 2015 APR and, if so, have mitigation measures been successful in minimizing losses (Action A3)?*

## **European Union - Spain (Asturias), CNL(16)27**

*The Implementation Plan identifies five proposed actions, and the APR indicates that all of these are on-going. The APR provides very little information on the progress made to address the actions in 2015 and so more information is sought in the questions below. For the evaluation process to work effectively and be fair and equitable, the Review Group will require more detailed reporting on progress against each action in the 2017 APR.*

Fishing has been prohibited in estuaries and the sea since 2002. No catch and release data are provided, but the response to a question in 2014 indicated that all salmon caught from mid to end July are released. Unreported catch is thought to be negligible.

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** Annual monitoring programmes have been conducted in reserves as part of an action to reduce poaching (Action F1), and 'broodstock' counts have been undertaken to estimate the impacts of fisheries (Action F2). No further information has been provided.

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** An annual programme of cleaning and maintenance of the ladders in mini hydroelectric plants and removing obstacles impeding the upstream movement of salmon has been completed for 2015 (Action H1). Lectures have been given to heighten awareness of the fragility of salmon in the region (Action H2). An up-to-date inventory of river obstacles that impede passage in the river network has been completed (as was reported in 2015) (Action H3). No further information has been provided.

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** The IP indicates that there is no commercial salmon farming, but fry are reared for stocking using local wild broodstock. There are no actions relating to aquaculture in the IP.

### **Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

1. *What anti-poaching activities were conducted in 2015; what levels of poaching were recorded; and how many people were prosecuted (Action F1)?*
2. *What censuses were conducted in 2015; what are the current estimated impacts of the fisheries on stocks; and at what stock levels would action be taken to reduce exploitation (Action F2)?*
3. *What number and proportion of fishways in Asturias are included in the annual programme of cleaning (Action H1)?*
4. *How are the initiatives (e.g. lectures) to increase awareness of the fragility of salmon stocks at the edge of their range being used to improve salmon conservation (Action H2)?*
5. *Having completed the inventory of river obstacles that impede fish passage, what actions are now planned to achieve the expected outcome of increasing spawning habitats (Action H3)?*

## European Union - Spain (Cantabria), CNL(16)28

*The Implementation Plan identifies 10 proposed actions. The APR indicates that work has not yet started on seven of these but is ongoing on the other three (work was said to be ongoing on four actions in the 2014 APR and two in the 2015 APR). Despite being 60% of the way through the IP period, work has not started on seven of the actions, and the Review Group is concerned to know when work will begin on these. The APR provides very little information on the progress to address the ongoing actions in 2015 and so more information is sought in the questions below. For the evaluation process to work effectively and be fair and equitable, the Review Group will require more detailed reporting on progress against each action in the 2017 APR.*

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** The Implementation Plan includes actions to reduce exploitation of MSW salmon (Action F1), to develop conservation limits and management targets (Action A3), and to estimate exploitation levels (Action F4). The APR states that no work has started on these three actions, although the opening of the fishing season was again delayed in 2015. Action F2 seeks to promote catch and release among stakeholders, but in 2015 it was found that anglers were releasing fish in order to continue fishing for larger specimens without exceeding the catch limit of one fish/angler/day; catch and release of any fish above the legal size limits has, therefore, been banned in 2016. Sampling of smolts and juveniles is continuing in an index river but no estimates of marine survival have yet been obtained (Action F5).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** One fish pass has been modified to improve broodstock selection, but this has not increased accessibility to habitat upstream (Action H1). Four projects are underway to install gratings at the entrance and exits of hydropower facilities, but progress has been limited (Action H2). No work has started on two other actions to provide appropriate river flows by implementing sustainable abstraction programmes (Action H3) and to develop integrated catchment management plans to reduce land-use impacts (Action H4).

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** No work has started on the planned action to regulate salmonid stocking by implementing and enforcing existing and proposed new stocking programmes (Action A1).

### Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:

1. *All the actions in the IP were scheduled to commence in 2014, but very little progress has been reported in the last three years. What will be done to ensure that work on actions F1, F2, F3, F4, H3, H4 and A1 is completed before 2018?*
2. *When are the first estimates of marine survival for Cantabrian salmon stocks expected to be obtained (Action F5)?*
3. *What work is planned to achieve the expected outcome of improving connectivity between freshwater habitats and the sea (Action H1)?*
4. *What work is underway or is planned to achieve the expected outcome of obtaining a better understanding of the potential impacts of hydropower (Action H2)?*

## European Union - Spain (Galicia), CNL(16)29

*The Implementation Plan identifies eight proposed actions, and the APR indicates that work has not started on three of these but is ongoing on the remaining five. The Review Group is concerned that work has not started on three of the actions despite being 60% of the way through the IP period. The APR provides very little information on the progress to address the ongoing actions in 2015 and so more information is sought in the questions below. For the evaluation process to work effectively and be fair and equitable, the Review Group will require more detailed reporting on progress against each action in the 2016 APR.*

The APR indicates that the stocking programme on the rivers Sor and Anllóns (A Coruña province) continued in 2015 and the first spring salmon returns are expected in 2016. The lower part of the river Anllóns has been declared 'Free Access Catch and Release waters'. There are no salmon fisheries in the sea; levels of unreported catches and catch and release are reported to be unknown.

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** Action F1 aims to develop conservation limits for, at least, the Rivers Eo and Ulla, and Action F2 involves working with the central government of Spain to develop fishing rules and undertake research in the River Miño. Work has not begun on either of these planned actions. As part of an action to develop and implement specific fishing rules for trout and sea-trout in salmon rivers, compulsory catch and release has been introduced in the lower reaches of the river Anllóns (Action F3). Progress on the development of a Conservation/Restoration Plan for salmon rivers in the A Coruña province is ongoing, but the progress made in 2015 is unclear (Action F4).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** The implementation of guidelines for the management of riparian vegetation in order to control river temperatures has not yet started (Action H1). Implementation of the WFD requires all rivers to be raised to 'good ecological status'; the APR indicates that only the rivers Anllóns, Xubia and Miño rivers failed to meet this standard, but no details are provided of actions that are being taken to address the problems (Action H2). The new River Basin Plans (2015-2021) for salmon rivers in Galicia have been approved which include the definition of compensation flows for every water body (Action H3). Seven dams have been removed in the lower Ulla basin (under the Life+ Margal-Ulla project LIFE NAT/ES/000514) and the construction of some fishways in A Coruña province is under investigation (Action H4).

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** There are no actions relating to aquaculture in the IP.

### Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:

1. *All the actions in the IP were scheduled to commence in 2014, but very little progress has been reported in the last three years. What will be done to ensure that work on Actions F1, F2 and H1 is completed by the end of 2018?*
2. *What work was undertaken in 2015 on the development of management strategies for sea trout and trout in salmon rivers other than the River Anllóns to achieve the expected outcomes of minimizing impacts on salmon and reducing unreported catches of salmon (Action F3)?*
3. *What work is planned for the development of a Conservation/Restoration Plan for salmon rivers in the A Coruña province (Action F4)?*

4. *What plans are there to remove obstructions and build fishways in rivers other than the River Ulla (Action H4)?*

## European Union - Spain (Navarra), CNL(16)30

*The Implementation Plan identifies six proposed actions. Three actions were completed or partially completed for 2015, the objectives are reported to have been achieved and the APR provides quantitative information on the progress made. Despite being 60% of the way through the IP period, work has not started on the other three actions, although one is scheduled to begin in 2016. The Review Group is concerned to know when work will begin on the other two actions.*

The APR indicates that a new salmon protection measure has established an overall TAC of 83 salmon and a TAC for MSW salmon of 28 for the entire angling season based on the size and age structure of the returning salmon population in the past five years. When 80% of the MSW TAC is reached (22 MSW salmon), the angling season is closed for a week. There are no fisheries in estuaries or the sea, there is said to be no unreported catch and catch and release is considered to be uncommon.

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** Work has not yet started on the development of conservation limits due to lack of funding (Action F1). Biological sampling of rod caught salmon and monitoring of juveniles was completed for 2015 although smolt trapping was not possible due to flood damage (Action F2). A TAC of 83 salmon was set for the rod fishery in 2015, with a new TAC for MSW salmon alone of 28 (Action F3). Broodstock collection and fry and autumn parr stocking have been undertaken on the Bidasoa river and its tributaries in 2015 (Action F4).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** No work has begun to update salmonid mesohabitat maps (Action H1). An evaluation of the effectiveness of 10 fish-ways built in the last decade and the development of projects to improve river connectivity are due to start in 2016 under a LIFE project (LIFE14 NAT/ES/000186) (Action H2).

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** There are no actions relating to aquaculture in the Implementation Plan.

### **Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

1. *All the actions in the IP were scheduled to commence in 2014, but work has yet to commence on Actions F1, H1 and H2 (although H2 is scheduled to commence in 2016). What will be done to ensure that work is completed on these actions by the end of 2018?*



## European Union - Sweden, CNL(16)32

*The Implementation Plan identifies eighteen proposed actions. The APR provides clear and comprehensive reports on the progress made to address each of the actions in 2015 and including quantitative information. Three actions have been completed and are reported to have achieved their objectives and the other fifteen actions are ongoing.*

In 2015, a national plan for the future conservation and management of salmon and sea-running brown trout for stocks in both the Baltic sea and the Atlantic was completed but it has not yet resulted in any changes to the Implementation Plan. In 2014, a ban was imposed on gill net fishing for salmon on the coast at water depths >3m and this has resulted in no mixed stock fishing taking place on the coast in 2015. The proportion of the total number of salmon released after capture in rivers increased to 18%.

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** There was no legal commercial fishing for salmon on the coast for the first time in 2015, and it is estimated that a bag limit of two salmonid fish will result in practically no fishing mortality for salmon in the marine sport fishery (Action F1). A ban on gill net fishing in coastal waters >3m was introduced from March 2014, but catch in the fishery did not decrease in 2014, and in 2015 the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water management filed a law suit for illegal fishing against the responsible fishermen. There is still a mixed fishery for reared and wild fish in the rivers Lagan and Göta älv, but reared fish can be distinguished by the presence of fin clips (Action F2). Between 2000 and 2015 an average of ~174,000 salmon smolts has been released annually (Action F3).

Sampling began in 2014 to establish a genetic baseline for Swedish salmon stocks; the base line was completed in 2015, and a report will be published in late 2016 (Action F4). The efficiency of the River Ätran index river trap was evaluated in 2015, and the results will be published in 2016 (Action F5). Considerable progress has been made in establishing conservation limits, and preliminary results suggest that these will be set at about 5.5 eggs per m<sup>2</sup> of wetted river. It should be possible to establish conservation limits for all rivers in 2017 (Actions F6). Data on in-river exploitation was successfully gathered for the index river in 2015 (Action F7).

Work is underway to reduce fishing effort and improve voluntary catch reporting by non-commercial fishermen, who mainly fish using gill nets on the coast (Action F8). There has been no progress on reducing over-exploitation of MSW fish in rivers through restrictions on landing large fish but voluntary restrictions are implemented by individuals on some rivers. During autumn 2015, a report was published on the effect on egg deposition in Swedish rivers of introducing maximum lengths or/and no catch of females. (Action F9). Juvenile recruitment surveys were conducted in three rivers in 2015 (Action F10). Fish management units have been established on many rivers but an inventory compiled in 2015 showed that there was a need for management units on smaller rivers and in parts of some larger rivers; information exchange and discussions with the different river managers and land owners are ongoing (Action F11).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** All 20 salmon rivers that require liming are included in a liming programme and a report published in 2015 concluded that this had achieved the goals for water chemistry and abundance of fry and parr (Action H1). A report produced in 2015 shows that there are 306 hectares of spawning and rearing habitat of salmon on the Swedish west coast; this has increased by 16% since 1999, mainly due to new fishways, liming operations and habitat improvement (Action H2). A plan for continued habitat restoration in salmon rivers started in 2015 with coordination of plans by the three regional counties and the Swedish University of

Agricultural Sciences (Action H3). Criteria for best available technology (BAT) for hydropower generation were published in December 2015 (Action H4). Work in establishing criteria and a plan for the surveillance of hydropower plants according to Environmental Law and the BAT is ongoing (Action H5).

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** Annual monitoring of rivers for the presence of *G. salaris* was undertaken as planned and protective measures have been introduced to avoid spreading the parasite, including a ban on stocking salmonid fish in uninfected rivers. During 2015 a new river (River Rolfsån in the county Halland) was infected, the first river since 2005. Monitoring in infected rivers has shown that the number of Gyrodactylus per fish has decreased over time (Action A1). Genetic screening for escaped farmed salmon will be undertaken during 2016 (Action A2).

**Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

*The Review Group has no questions on this APR and commends Sweden on the clarity of its report.*

## European Union - UK (England and Wales), CNL(16)24

*The Implementation Plan identifies 12 proposed actions, a number of which are divided into sub-headings. The APR provides clear and comprehensive reports to address the topic areas covered by each action, all of which are ongoing with some elements completed.*

The Environment Agency hosted a “Salmon Summit” to raise awareness about the state of England’s salmon stocks and to bring together influential leaders to discuss salmon protection and enhancement measures. The Environment Agency, Defra, its agencies and partner organizations are now developing a five-point approach with proposals for actions on: improving marine survival; further reducing exploitation by nets and rods; removing barriers to migration and enhancing habitat; safeguarding sufficient flows; and improving water quality.

Statutory Instruments prohibiting fishing for salmon in the sea have been consolidated without change to make them clearer. New Net Limitation Orders were approved for a number of fisheries.

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** An annual assessment of the status of salmon stocks was completed for 2015 (Action F1). Net limitation orders (NLOs) were reviewed for the fisheries in three estuaries: for the Teign estuary, the NLO was maintained at three seine nets; for the Dart estuary, a reducing NLO of zero was introduced for the seine net fishery and the remaining nets have now been bought out in perpetuity; and for the Dee estuary, the reducing NLO of zero was maintained for the seine and trammel net fisheries but there has been no fishing since 2009 because of a buy-off of all nets (Action F2). The reducing NLO for the Anglian Coastal fishery (NLO of zero) was maintained through a new regulatory measure and further progress was made on genetic stock assignment studies on catches in mixed-stock fisheries. An investigation into the possibility of capping catches in the North East coast net fishery has been completed and the APR indicates that further action in relation to management of the fishery will be taken forward under the five-point approach (Action A3). Efforts to promote catch and release fishing continue, including a voluntary carcass tagging scheme in the Rivers Ribble and Eden, and catch and release was estimated at 79% (9,925 salmon) in 2015 (Action F4). Efforts aimed at disrupting illegal fishing continued in 2015 with a number of net seizures and other prosecutions (Action F5).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** Approximately 55,000 trees have been planted and 27.5 km of fencing erected since last year’s update on the Keeping Rivers Cool Project. Climate change is considered in RBMPs and the final plans were published in February 2016; a review of the impacts of thermal emissions on the marine environment has been published (Action H1). Progress in reconnecting salmon habitat continued in 2015 with improved access for salmon to 280km of river in England and improved access to about 700 km of river in Wales (Action H2). Actions have been taken to provide appropriate river flows under the Restoring Sustainable Abstraction Programme; under the 2014 Water Act new regulations for trickle irrigation and several other abstractions will enter into force from 2016 (Action H3). A number of actions have been taken concerning integrated catchment management including investigating the sources of sediment, stakeholder engagement, encouraging uptake of incentive schemes, pollution prevention campaigns and improving soil protection, making use of local partnerships and reviewing Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (Action H4).

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** In England, the Environment Agency will no longer permit stocking of salmon into rivers that are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) where salmon is a qualifying feature (Action A1). Natural Resources Wales has also decided to end the stocking of salmon (and sea trout) into Welsh rivers beginning in 2014; stocking is now being replaced by alternative means of delivering benefit for fish and fisheries, including work to resolve

barriers to migration and sub-optimum habitats (Action A1). New live fish movement legislation came into force in January 2015 (Action A2). A desktop exercise, project 'Alpheus', was undertaken in 2015 to test Great Britain's response to a *G. salaris* outbreak (Action A2). A research project evaluating the impacts on freshwater fish populations of contaminants in effluents from fish farms has been completed and will be published shortly (Action A3).

**Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

1. *How are erosion events measured and were there any penalties in 2015 (Action H4)?*
2. *Are any additional preventative measures planned in response to the findings of project 'Alpheus' described in Action A2?*

## European Union - UK (Northern Ireland), CNL(16)37

*The Implementation Plan identifies eleven proposed actions one of which has been completed and is reported to have achieved its objective. However, as previously reported by the Review Group, the precise activities that were planned are unclear (with some descriptions of actions reading like progress reports), making it difficult to evaluate the progress made. The APR provides a clear and comprehensive report on the progress made to address some of the actions. However, very little information has been provided on the progress to address a number of other actions in 2015 and no report on progress is made for action F3 so more information is sought in the questions below. For the evaluation process to work effectively and be fair and equitable, the Review Group will require more detailed reporting on progress against each action in the 2017 APR.*

Legislation is now in place to manage salmon exploitation and prevent harvests of salmon from rivers not meeting their management targets in the DCAL area. The APR indicates that catch and release is N/A in the Loughs Agency Area but it is not clear if this means Not Applicable or signifies that statistics are not available.

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** New legislation came into effect in 2014 that prohibits commercial netting or recreational angling for salmon in the DCAL area based on an assessment of individual stocks and compliance with management targets. Commercial fisheries in both the DCAL and Loughs Agency area are currently closed (Actions F1 and F2). No progress has been reported for 2015 on mandatory catch and release before 1 June in the DCAL area to protect MSW salmon (Action F3). Monitoring of compliance with legislation is carried out through planned patrols and response to reports of illegal activity, but no quantitative information has been provided on activities in 2015 (Action F4).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** An interdepartmental working group has been established to review and update current protocols and procedures used to grant permissions for hydropower; the existing guidance on run of the river hydros is being updated. Assessment of the impacts on fisheries of water abstraction works continued in 2015 (Action H1). Assessment of the impacts on fisheries of drainage and other works continued in 2015 (Action H2). Monitoring programs were undertaken in 2014 in relation to trade and sewage waste discharge; however, it is unclear if this continued in 2015 (Action H3). Work to identify barriers to migration has continued and a study of cumulative effects is being written up. A range of habitat improvement works were conducted in 2015. (Action H4). To reduce illegal alterations to salmon habitat, an advisory booklet has been published and distributed to the public; however, it is unclear if further progress was made in 2015 to reduce illegal alterations to habitat (Action H5). A salmon habitat survey was initiated on the Agivey River in 2015 (Action H6).

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** An investigation of sea lice levels on wild salmon and the level of genetic introgression in wild salmon from escaped farmed salmon has been completed. Details of sea lice levels are provided. Farm origin genetic signals were found in between 2.6% and 6.7% of juveniles sampled across ten rivers in Northern Ireland and evidence of second generation back-crosses between farmed and wild salmon were found, albeit at a low level (Action A1).

**Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

1. *Has the mandatory catch and release of all rod caught salmon before 1 June in the DCAL area continued in 2015 (Action F3)?*
2. *What progress was made with enforcement activities in 2015 (e.g. numbers of patrols, numbers of nets seized and numbers of prosecutions taken in 2015 (Action F4)?*
3. *What progress was made in reducing the impacts of drainage works on salmon habitat (Action H2)?*
4. *What were the results of any monitoring undertaken in accordance with water pollution legislation in 2015 (Action H3)?*
5. *How many routine fishery enforcement patrols were conducted in 2015 (Action H5)?*
6. *Do the genetic results provide any indication as to the origin of the fish farm escapees (Action A1)?*

## European Union - UK (Scotland), CNL(16)26

*The Implementation Plan identifies 12 proposed actions, a number of which are divided into sub-headings. The APR describes some major developments in the management of salmon stocks and fisheries in 2015 consistent with NASCO guidelines. However, much of the APR is confused or unclear and provides very little information on the progress to address the actions in 2015 so more information is sought in the questions below. No report on progress has been provided for actions A1 and A2. For the evaluation process to work effectively and be fair and equitable, the Review Group will require more detailed reporting on progress against each action in the 2017 APR.*

Scotland recently completed a review of the management of salmon and freshwater fisheries. The Scottish Government has taken action to limit killing of salmon beyond estuary limits for the next three years (from 2016) because of the mixed-stock nature of the fishery and limited data on the composition of the catch. Conservation limits have been developed, and there are also new measures to limit killing of salmon in inland waters according to their conservation status as well as the introduction of a carcass tagging program for net caught salmon for certain areas.

The APR does not provide catch data for calendar year 2015; the reasoning for this has previously been explained.

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** An independent review of the management of salmon and freshwater fisheries has been completed. Draft provisions for a Wild Fisheries Bill and Wild Fisheries Strategy (following the recommendations from the Wild Fisheries Review) are reported to be currently undergoing consultation (Action F1a). Research has been commissioned into the economic and financial contribution of wild fisheries in Scotland and will be published in 2016 (Action F1b). The APR states that the proposed salmon conservation regulations will require the development of conservation plans for each district irrespective of conservation status but no clear progress has been reported (Action F2a). A paper summarizing the engineering requirements, options and costs involved in the deployment of a network of counters was recently published, although the link to the website provided an error message (Action F2b and F3a). With regard to assessing the nature of mixed-stock fisheries, a paper on the use of genetics to identify regions of origin of salmon was published in 2016, although the link to the website provided an error message (Action F3a), and a paper has been published as a contribution to better understanding coastal migrations of adult salmon (Action F3c). Action F4 is a general fisheries management action for which there is no clear progress reported but reference is made to a study on effects of electromagnetic fields on fish behavior which appears to relate to Action F5a. Action F5a suggests that a monitoring and research strategy for analyzing impacts to salmon from marine renewable energy projects should be developed. Although some progress on technical aspects of these interactions is ongoing, there is no clear progress reported in terms of the development of the overall strategy. Action F5b provides goal statements for the continued growth of the aquaculture industry in Scotland but no clear progress for 2015 (the research strategy was published in 2014). Action F5c relates to research funding for investigating sea lice impacts including reference to individual research projects and the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre. Action F5d provides an update on the aquaculture industry's enhanced, voluntary quarterly publication of sea lice data. Although a link to the report is provided, no summary of progress is provided in the APR. Action F5e provides an update on a 3-year project to identify areas of opportunity and restriction for aquaculture including considerations of risks to wild salmon. Progress reports have recently been made available to various stakeholders and a final report is expected in 2016. Action F5f provides an update on a particle tracking model (autoDEPOMOD) that is expected to be made available in 2016. Action F5g provides an update on the Scottish Shelf Modeling project that should inform sea lice dispersal

projections. Actions F5h and F5i provide links to operational websites but no summaries of the progress in 2015.

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** Action H1 describes a broad suite of activities under Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Plans. In 2015, a temperature monitoring network was implemented including spatial modeling components. The work of the temperature monitoring network is described in a peer-reviewed paper and a link to a website is provided. This information appears relevant to actions H1a and H1b, but no clear progress on actions H1c-f is provided. A barrier assessment program is underway; the APR suggests that a prioritization process is complete but no progress toward barrier removal is provided (Action H2). There are plans to ensure appropriate provision of river flows and habitat modeling efforts are underway to support their implementation. River Basin Management Plans have prioritized 108 waterbodies for actions to improve flows (Action H3a-b). An integrated catchment management approach is proposed to reduce the impact of land use (Action H4) and 53 catchments were prioritised in 2015 for action to improve land use practices over the period from 2016 - 2021.

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** No progress reports have been provided for Actions A1 and A2. Technical Standards for Finfish Aquaculture were published in 2015 and require that site appropriate equipment to prevent escapes is in place at all fin fish farms by 2020 at the latest (Action A3).

#### **Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

- 1. Several progress reports for actions are unclear, do not appear to relate to 2015 or not to the specific action. Some responses refer to websites but provide no summary information (see instructions), and some links do not work. The Review Group requests clarification of the progress reports for the following actions: F4b, F5a, F5b, F5d F5h, F5i, H1c, H1d, H1e, H1f.*
- 2. What actions were taken in 2015 with regard to regulating stocking of salmonids and freshwater fish (Action A1)?*
- 3. What actions were taken in 2015 to implement EC Council Regulation 708/2007 concerning Use of Alien and Locally Absent Species in Aquaculture and to prevent G. Salaris and other parasites occurring in Scotland (Action A2)?*
- 4. What key objectives of the Ministerial Group on Aquaculture have been delivered; and how is the structure of the Ministerial Group on Aquaculture likely to change (Action A3)?*
- 5. The Review Group considers that all Parties and jurisdictions with salmon farming should have presented quantitative data in a transparent manner in their Implementation Plans as a baseline for demonstrating progress towards meeting the international goals for sea lice and containment set out in the NASCO Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks. Summary data are requested to provide the baselines for Scottish salmon farming facilities.*



## Norway, CNL(16)33

*The Implementation Plan identifies 12 planned actions and all are ongoing. Succinct reports have been provided on the progress made with all of the actions in 2015, but a number lack quantitative data where this is needed to gauge the extent of the progress; more information is sought on these in the questions below.*

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** New fishing regulations have been implemented and these will take effect from 2016 (Action F1). The APR indicates that an increasing number of rivers are subject to mandatory mid-season fishery assessments, and the way that local managers handle the mid-season assessment is being evaluated. Legislation is also being developed to introduce ‘continuous reporting’ of catches in the sea fisheries (Action F2). Work is continuing to improve conservation limits by collecting more stock-recruitment data series and additional information about mesohabitat distribution and juvenile salmon production (Action F3). A new agreement on a revised management regime for the River Tana is expected to be signed with Finland in June 2016 and enter into force before the fishing season in 2017 (Action F4).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** Twenty-two rivers are now included in the national liming program and in 2015 the program cost NOK47 million (approximately £4 million). These rivers now produce 10-14% of the total salmon catch in Norway (Action H1). New rules for the operation of hydropower plants have been set for the river Årdal and provide new minimum summer and winter flows. Forty other revisions are underway, some of which are in rivers with anadromous species (Actions H2). Regional plans, setting environmental objectives and prioritizing habitat improvements, were finalized in 2015. The road authorities have planned work to mitigate obstructions caused by roads in prioritized rivers and have already removed 15 such obstacles (Action H3). Two habitat restoration projects have been completed in northern Norway involving the removal of old erosion protection works in the river Kvalvik in Lyngen and in the Alta river (Action H4).

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** The national programme to monitor the sensitivity of sea lice to treatments is continuing and the Parliament has developed a new policy for determining how aquaculture will be allowed to grow based on its environmental footprint. Action is taken against farms that exceed lice limits, including a requirement to harvest and/or reduce site biomass (Action A1). Research is continuing on animal welfare considerations relating to the use of sterile fish in aquaculture, and several commercial salmon farmers have started using triploid fish as a ‘green’ rearing approach. The second report of the national programme for monitoring escaped salmon will be completed in April 2016, and will be continued on an annual basis (Action A2). The *G. salaris* treatment programme was completed in the Rana region, and the first rotenone treatment was undertaken on two infected rivers in the Skibotn region. A second treatment in this region will be implemented in 2016. All preparations for the building of a fish barrier in River Driva were completed, and construction was due to start in January 2016 (Action A3). A monitoring programme has been implemented to record the prevalence of pink salmon in Finnmark county. A programme has also been initiated to monitor the downstream spread of minnow to areas used by salmon in the river Namsen (Action A4).

**Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

1. *What were the major changes in the fishery regulations that were introduced from 2016 (Action F1)?*
2. *How many rivers had mandatory mid-season assessments in 2015 compared with previous years (Action F2)?*
3. *How many rivers currently have reliable stock-recruitment data and what new information is being obtained on mesohabitat distribution and juvenile production (Action F3)?*
4. *How many fish farms exceeded the sea lice limit in 2015, and what action was taken? What growth in the salmon farming industry is anticipated based on the new policy decided by the Parliament (Action A1)?*
5. *What are the current estimates of pink salmon numbers in Finnmark and have the measures implemented been successful in reducing the breeding populations (Action A4)?*

## Russian Federation, CNL(16)25

*The Implementation Plan identifies nine proposed actions, and the APR provides a clear report on the progress made to address them in 2015. One action (Action F4) has been completed and is reported to have achieved its objective; the other eight actions are ongoing.*

The APR provides only partial information on catch and release and no estimate of unreported catch has been provided.

In autumn 2015 the Russian Federation and Norway signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in management of, and monitoring and research on, wild Atlantic salmon in Finnmark County (Norway) and the Murmansk region (the Russian Federation). The first meeting of a Working Group, comprising scientists and managers, established under the MoU has been held. In August 2015, the decision was taken to close recreational salmon fisheries in the Kola River (Murmansk region) after a large number (700 salmon; about 10% of the run) of dead adult salmon were recorded in the river; the mortality is believed to be due to Ulcerative Dermal Necrosis (UDN).

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** Measures to reduce the level of unreported catches in the Varzuga River were developed in 2015. New rules restrict boat usage and prohibit rafting and other boat activities from 15 July until ice cover. Salmon recreational fisheries were closed in some remote fishing sites on the Varzuga River for the 2015 and 2016 seasons. Protection patrols were carried out on lakes and rivers by fisheries inspectors of the Regional Directorate of the Federal Agency for Fisheries and in coastal areas of the Barents and White Seas by fisheries inspectors of the Border Guard Department of the Russian Federal Security Service (Action F1). A comprehensive genetic baseline has been established through the Kolarctic Atlantic Salmon project (2011 – 2013), allowing for precise identification of wild salmon caught at sea to individual rivers/regions and providing opportunities for more adaptive and informed management of coastal salmon fisheries. The findings were used in developing quota allocations for coastal salmon fisheries in the White Sea on the basis of data on contributions of salmon stocks to the fisheries. No Atlantic salmon fisheries are allowed in the Russian Federation in the Barents Sea. (Action F2). Conservation limits have been set for some salmon stocks including all rivers in the Murmansk Region and for a number of those in the Murmansk region revised estimates were made in 2015 (Action F3). Clearer legislation has been put in place to manage the fisheries conducted by indigenous small nations of the North (Action F4).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** Estimates of the carrying capacity of some Barents Sea rivers in the Murmansk region were revised in 2015 on the basis of new data on spawning and nursery grounds. The reassessment of the carrying capacity of the White Sea rivers of the Murmansk and Archangelsk regions is underway (Action H1). A habitat inventory has been established for the Barents Sea rivers and the work in developing the inventory of salmon rivers of the White sea basin of Murmansk and Archangelsk regions is underway. General recommendations on habitat restoration were prepared for a number of salmon rivers in the Murmansk region (Action H2).

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** The Federal Law on Aquaculture came into force on 1 January 2014. A number of by-laws came into force in 2015 (Action A1). Monitoring is undertaken for *G. salaris* in a number of rivers, and the parasite is present in the Keret River in Karelia. The APR indicates that there is a risk of further spread of the parasite in rivers of the Republic of Karelia and a risk of its introduction to the Murmansk region through recreational fisheries and freshwater aquaculture activities. Veterinary control is applied for aquaculture. New

veterinary measures for aquaculture activities in the Murmansk region have been under development. Some recreational fishing companies in the Murmansk region started voluntary programmes for anglers to disinfect their fishing tackle and clothes but no obligatory measures to prevent the introduction or further spread of the parasite through recreational fisheries have been developed (Action A2). New rules relating to the introduction of aquatic species came into force in 2010. A comprehensive scientific evaluation is required prior to any introduction of aquatic species and no movements of reproductively viable non-indigenous anadromous salmonids or their gametes originating from outside the North-East Atlantic Commission area has occurred (Action A3).

**Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

1. *The Review Group notes that some data are collected on unreported catches but no information is provided on unreported catches in section 2.2. Why were partial estimates of unreported catches not provided and when will these be reported to NASCO (Action F1)?*
2. *In answer to a question on Action A1 in its 2014 report, the Russian Federation indicated that they would provide more information on how sea lice are managed under the new Federal Law on aquaculture. Please provide this information (Action A1)?*
3. *The APR indicates that a number of by-laws introduced under the Federal Law on aquaculture came into force in 2015. What general measures did these bye-laws contain (Action A1)?*
4. *Why have obligatory measures not been introduced to prevent the spread of *G.salaris* in the wild (Action A2)?*
5. *The Review Group considers that all Parties and jurisdictions with salmon farming should have presented quantitative data in a transparent manner in their Implementation Plans as a baseline for demonstrating progress towards meeting the international goals for sea lice and containment set out in the NASCO Guidance on Best Management Practices to Address Impacts of Sea Lice and Escaped Farmed Salmon on Wild Salmon Stocks. Summary data are requested to provide the baselines for salmon farming facilities in the Russian Federation.*

## United States of America, CNL(16)23

*The Implementation Plan identifies eleven proposed actions. The APR provides a clear and comprehensive report on the progress made to address the planned actions in 2015.*

In 2016, NOAA announced a new program to increase its efforts to protect some of the species that are currently among the most at risk of extinction. The Gulf of Maine (GOM) Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of Atlantic salmon was selected as one of eight 'Species in the Spotlight' nationally. At the regional level, the USA recently developed a 5-year action plan that details the focused efforts needed to reduce threats and stabilize population declines of the GOM DPS of Atlantic salmon. The plan highlights four key areas: reconnecting the Gulf of Maine with headwater habitats; increasing the number of fish successfully entering the marine environment; reducing international fishery mortality; and increasing understanding and ability to improve survival in the marine environment. Efforts are underway to engage public and private parties in support of this initiative.

There are no targeted fisheries for sea-run Atlantic salmon in the US and consequently zero catch is reported. However, small fisheries for domestic broodstock occur in some rivers outside the geographic range of the endangered populations. Unreported catch is estimated to be zero.

**Actions related to management of salmon fisheries:** In 2015, the United States continued to play an active role in the work of NASCO (Action F1). There are stringent regulations governing recreational fishing for other species in salmon habitats e.g. prohibition on retaining landlocked salmon and brown trout >25 inches in length in 30 waterbodies. Discussions are continuing to develop of a comprehensive conservation plan applicable to the entire freshwater range of endangered salmon (Action F2). Directed fisheries for sea-run salmon are all closed and there was no record of Atlantic salmon having been caught in commercial fisheries subject to federal jurisdiction in 2015. Surveillance in rivers for potential poaching activity was conducted routinely by conservation law officers throughout the salmon's freshwater range, (Action F3).

**Actions related to habitat protection and restoration:** In 2015, 21 additional aquatic connectivity projects were completed across the GOM DPS, and a total of over 77 km of stream habitat was made accessible as a result of these projects. A new downstream fishway was constructed in 2015 at the Holyoke Hydroelectric Project, the first dam on the Connecticut River. A bypass channel at the Howland Dam underwent initial testing and is expected to be fully operational for the spring migrations in 2016. This completes the Penobscot River restoration programme (Action H1). The Maine Department of Environmental Protection implements water quality programmes under the Clean Water Act and state law, and enforcement actions in Maine over the last five years have resulted in approximately US\$400,000 in fines (Action H2). Consultations continued in 2015 among federal agencies concerning salmon Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and 10 conservation recommendations were issued to address adverse effects on salmon habitat (Action H3). NOAA and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) completed 12 consultations in 2015, each of which produced conservation recommendations to prevent degradation of designated critical habitat and reduce incidental mortality of salmon (Action H4).

**Actions related to aquaculture and associated activities:** Monitoring of active farm sites in Maine showed all sites were in full compliance with the required permit conditions and there were no reports of farmed fish being captured in Maine Rivers containing endangered Atlantic salmon in 2015. A survey of sea lice infestation rates of >6,000 wild fish (no Atlantic salmon) in Cobscook Bay showed only *Caligus elongatus* being present but no *Lepeophtheirus salmonis* (Action A1). Revisions to the existing fish health guidelines were completed to include fish importation,

movement and transfer between all states in the Northeast United States (Action A2). Broodstock management protocols have been implemented at conservation hatcheries to maintain genetic diversity of the hatchery stock rebuilding program (Action A3). Many salmon rivers are no longer stocked with non-native salmonids (e.g. brown trout) but there is not yet a comprehensive conservation plan (Action A4).

**Questions for written response prior to the 2016 Annual Meeting:**

1. *What is being done to ensure recreational fisheries for other species do not result in a bycatch of Atlantic salmon (Action F2)?*