

CNL40.2168

16 October 2020

Dear {Party / jurisdiction},

The Council of NASCO agreed in 2005 that, to improve commitment to NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines, each jurisdiction should develop Implementation Plans detailing the measures to be taken over five year periods (2007-2012; 2013-2018 and 2019-2024) in relation to management of salmon fisheries; habitat protection and restoration; and minimising the adverse impacts of aquaculture, introductions and transfers and transgenics.

The purpose of these Implementation Plans (IPs), together with annual reporting of progress on the actions contained within them, is to strengthen the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines and provide a succinct, transparent, fair and balanced approach for demonstrating the implementation.

Following two rounds of review in 2019 of the IPs in the third reporting cycle (2019-2024), NASCO's Council agreed to improve / refine the review process during its September Inter-Sessional Meeting. This has resulted in a decision to provide enhanced guidance to the NASCO body reviewing the IPs. The document is attached as Annex 1.

There is a deadline for submission to NASCO of revised IPs of 1 November 2020.

I therefore request that you:

- provide a revised IP to the Secretariat by 1 November 2020;
- indicate which sections / responses have been modified from your previous IP; and
- explain if the Review Group's suggestions on modifications have not been, or could not be, addressed with respect to relevant sections / responses.

NASCO's IP / APR Review Group will meet in mid-November either to assess your revised IP, or to reassess the most recently submitted IP, if no further revision has been provided, based on the enhanced guidance from Council. The IP reviewed in November will provide the basis for reporting in 2021 via the Annual Progress Reports.

I will write again after the review, with information on the outcome and next steps.

Kind regards,



Serge Doucet
President

CNL(20)55

Enhanced Guidance from the Council of NASCO for the Review of Implementation Plans

The purpose of this document is:

- A. To confirm decisions by the Council regarding its commitment to the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines under the third reporting cycle (2019-2024).
- B. To recognise that the Implementation Plan / Annual Progress Report Review Group (the Review Group) has the flexibility to review Implementation Plans (IPs) to:
 - determine if the IPs provide a fair and equitable basis for assessing the progress that the Party or jurisdiction will make in implementing NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines; and
 - consider if the actions contained within them provide a basis for Parties / jurisdictions to make progress in implementing NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines; and
- C. To clarify Council's interpretation of the Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress, CNL(18)49, (the IP Guidelines).

To strengthen implementation under the third reporting cycle (2019-2024), the Council has decided that:

1. The President of NASCO will write, forthwith, to the relevant Minister, or other nominated official¹, of all Parties / jurisdictions with Implementation Plans (IPs) that are not yet considered as satisfactory by the Review Group. The President will request that Parties / jurisdictions:
 - provide revised IPs to the Secretariat by 1 November 2020;
 - provide an indication with the returned IPs as to which sections / responses have been modified; and
 - explain if the Review Group's suggestions on modifications have not been, or cannot be, addressed with respect to relevant sections / responses.
2. Following the November 2020 review of IPs, for those Parties / jurisdictions with IPs, or sections of IPs, that are still considered by the Review Group to be unsatisfactory, the President of NASCO will write again to the relevant Minister, or other nominated official¹.
3. The second letter will include the November review, and request a response to include how the Party / jurisdiction will demonstrate progress towards the attainment of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines in areas where deficiencies have been identified. The intention is to allow the response to be available prior to the IP Special Session webinar in spring 2021.

¹ The Parties will inform the Secretariat of the name and contact details of the appropriate person

4. The letters from the President and the responses will be published on NASCO's website without delay after their receipt by the Secretariat. References to individuals or companies will be redacted from the correspondence prior to its publication.
5. The most recent version of each IP will be maintained on NASCO's website.
6. Any identified follow up on these matters discussed during the IP Special Session webinar in spring 2021 will be communicated to the Council for consideration and appropriate action at the 2021 Annual Meeting.
7. Given the number of IPs and the increasing complexity of reviews, the membership of the Review Group shall be increased by one member, preferably from a Party / jurisdiction not currently represented on the Group.

Enhanced guidance for the Review Group for their review of Implementation Plans

8. Where a Party / jurisdiction does not submit a revised IP, the most recent revision of their IP shall form the basis for review in November 2020.
9. There will be no overall classification of an IP as 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable'.
10. Instead, section (1), and each area of sections (2), (3) and (4), should be categorised as either 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory':
 - for clarification, IPs are split into four 'sections' (i.e. (1) Introduction; (2) Management of Salmon Fisheries; (3) Habitat Restoration and Protection; and (4) Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics); and
 - further, within sections (2), (3) and (4), the information sought is grouped into three 'areas' (i.e. responses to questions; threats and challenges; and SMART actions).
11. Where a section / area is deemed by the Review Group to be unsatisfactory, the Review Group will provide a clear explanation of its decision to the Party / jurisdiction and, where feasible and appropriate, offer specific suggestions / recommendations for how it could be improved.
12. Council recognises the use, and review, of SMART actions as recommended in the IP Guidelines. Where the Review Group considers that an action moves the Party / jurisdiction clearly towards the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines even if the action is not entirely in line with the SMART criteria, the Review Group may consider such an action as satisfactory.
13. However, where the elements of an action may appear to adhere to the SMART criteria but the action is considered by the Review Group not to move the Party / jurisdiction towards the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines, it should be deemed unsatisfactory. The Review Group should give a clear explanation of their assessment in their feedback.
14. The Review Group should assess the IP on the basis of the information provided by the Parties / jurisdictions. However, the Review Group may still seek clarity over any action they are uncertain about.
15. Parties / jurisdictions should submit their Annual Progress Report (APR) on the basis of their most recent IP submitted, even if the Review Group considers it to contain unsatisfactory sections. The APR templates issued by the Secretariat in January each year will, therefore, be based on the latest IP submitted.

Ongoing follow up

16. In each year of the third reporting cycle, in November, if the Review Group still considers that any sections / areas of an IP are unsatisfactory, the President will write to the relevant Minister (or other official) of that Party / jurisdiction to bring to their attention the unsatisfactory nature of this part of the IP and the importance of implementing NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. The President will remind the Party / jurisdiction of their commitment to make progress on implementing NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines, which are essential for ensuring that the objectives of the NASCO Convention to conserve, restore, enhance and rationally manage Atlantic salmon can be met, and enquire about their plans to make and report on progress towards that aim.