

Agenda item 5.4(b)  
For decision

**Council**

**CNL(01)22**

***Financial and Administrative Implications of Recommendations of the  
Working Group on International Cooperative Research***

*Financial and Administrative Implications of Recommendations from the Working Group on International Cooperative Research*

**Introduction**

1. The report of the Working Group on International Cooperative Research (CNL(01)21) indicates that: a significant proportion of the decline in salmon abundance has been attributed to an increase in marine mortality; many factors, operating alone or in combination, may affect marine mortality and the task of identifying these factors will be complex; research on salmon at sea is very expensive and current expenditure is a fraction of what will be required for a clearer understanding of the factors affecting salmon at sea.
2. In the light of this situation it is the Working Group's view that the aim should now be to generate new funding for research on salmon at sea and to better coordinate existing and new projects. The Group has recommended that an International Cooperative Salmon Research Programme should be established. In considering its response to the Working Group's recommendations, it may be important for the Council to be aware of the possible implications of the Group's proposal.

**The International Cooperative Salmon Research Programme (ICSRP)**

3. The ICSRP would consist of the sum of the projects contributed to it. A contribution might simply be a notification that a research project relevant to the programme would be carried out, but equally it might consist of a project that needed financial assistance. The Working Group has proposed that, in order to attract new funds from, for example, NGOs, industry and donations, a fund be established within NASCO. NASCO's Parties might be invited to make an initial voluntary financial contribution to the fund, which might serve as a catalyst to attract new funding. The ICSRP is, therefore, envisaged as a flexible concept that can accept contributions in many forms and from many sources. The Working Group felt that it would be desirable to use existing structures where possible, through the establishment of a Trust Fund under NASCO Financial Rule 6.1, with the sole aim of funding research on the causes of marine mortality and options to counteract this mortality. The Working Group has suggested that a Board be appointed to run the Programme.

**Administration**

4. If the Council decided to accept the Working Group's recommendations there would be a need to create a Trust or Special Fund in accordance with Financial Rule 6.1. NASCO's Financial Rules permit the acceptance of voluntary contributions by both members and non-members, if the purposes for which the contributions are made are consistent with the policies, aims and activities of the Organization. Such voluntary contributions are treated as Trust or Special Funds. Thus the proposal by the Working Group is consistent with the Financial Rules of the Organization.

5. On the basis of the Working Group's recommendations, it can be anticipated that the establishment of the ICSRP and associated Fund might involve the following tasks: developing rules of procedure for the Board and financial rules governing the operation of the Fund; publicising the existence of the Fund and fund-raising activities; establishing and servicing the ICSRP Board and any subsidiary bodies; receiving applications to the Programme and sending them to the Board or, if funding is sought, initiating an internal and/or external scientific evaluation of the proposal before making recommendations to the Board; receiving interim and final reports of the project from the recipients of funds; reporting annually to the Council on the results of the Programme and to ICES so that the information can be taken into account in formulating advice to NASCO; publication of the results of the Programme in international peer review journals. There are, therefore, substantial administrative implications of the Working Group's recommendations.

### **Cost Estimates**

6. The total cost estimate for the project concepts developed by the Working Group is of the order of several million pounds sterling. Even with such a programme, however, it must be recognised that while our knowledge of salmon at sea might be considerably increased, it may not be possible to counteract the mortality, even if the causal factors have been identified. For example, if the increased mortality is due to large-scale shifts in ocean climate, the knowledge gained may well improve our ability to obtain predictive advice on stock status and enhance the responsiveness of our management systems, but the mortality could not be counteracted. On the other hand, if by-catch was found to be a significant source of mortality, then there may be some opportunities to address the problem through appropriate management action.
7. The Working Group recommended that there should be initial voluntary funding by the NASCO Parties in order to encourage others to contribute. These voluntary contributions would have no impact on the Organization's budget, i.e. they are over and above existing contributions and at the discretion of the Parties. However, if voluntary funds were not forthcoming the Council may wish to consider budgetary provision. Even with these extra funds the programme could require a substantial additional fund-raising effort. It is likely that, given this and the administrative tasks identified above, some strengthening of the Secretariat would be needed, depending on the scale of the Programme. These associated costs might be in the region of £50,000 per annum.

### **Conclusion**

8. With the right handling and investment, there is no reason why an ICSRP should not be created and possibly become self-supporting. It may be able to generate significant new resources for research on salmon at sea. However, like all such projects, there would be an initial investment to set it all up. There is, moreover, the risk that, in practice, additional funds would not be easy to raise, and that the initial voluntary investment would have been made without producing the resources necessary to develop research programmes on salmon at sea. There is also the risk that the research would identify causal factors over which we could have little influence. However, a minimal solution need involve few extra costs since it could simply consist of the establishment of a forum to coordinate research on salmon at sea. In

that case, however, the Working Group felt that our understanding of salmon at sea may advance little.

9. The Council is asked to consider the recommendations in the Working Group's report and decide how it wishes to proceed.

Secretary  
Edinburgh  
11 May, 2001