

IP(23)12_EU – Spain (Asturias)

November 2023 Evaluation of the Revised Implementation Plan under the Third Reporting Cycle (2019 – 2024) from the Review Group to EU – Spain (Asturias)

NASCO considers that the provision of Implementation Plans, together with annual reporting of progress on actions contained within them, is one of the most valuable mechanisms that it has developed. It is a vitally important mechanism to strengthen implementation of NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. Parties to NASCO have committed to the conservation of wild Atlantic salmon. Parties’ / jurisdictions’ Implementation Plans set out their planned actions and these are reviewed by an expert Review Group. Reporting is carried out annually on these Plans (see <https://nasco.int/conservation/implementation-plans-and-reporting/>).

The Council agreed, in June 2021, that Parties / jurisdictions may, on a voluntary basis, submit a revised Implementation Plan for review.

The Review Group thanks EU – Spain (Asturias) for revising and submitting its Implementation Plan following previous evaluations from the Review Group. The Review Group re-assessed the responses to questions changed from the previous Implementation Plan.

In line with the ‘Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress’, [CNL\(18\)49](#), (the IP Guidelines) and the ‘Enhanced Guidance for the Review of Implementation Plans’, [CNL\(20\)55](#), the infographic below shows the overview of the Review Group’s evaluation, in November 2023, of EU – Spain (Asturias)’ Implementation Plan. Sections / areas considered to be ‘satisfactory’ are shown in green, those which are ‘partly satisfactory’ are shown in orange, together with the percentage of satisfactory responses, and those which are ‘unsatisfactory’ are in red.

	Questions on Salmon Management				Threats / Challenges to Wild Salmon			SMART Actions			
	Introduction / Background	Management of Salmon Fisheries	Habitat Protection & Restoration	Aquaculture, Introductions & Transfers & Transgenics	Management of Salmon Fisheries	Habitat Protection & Restoration	Aquaculture, Introductions & Transfers & Transgenics	Management of Salmon Fisheries	Habitat Protection & Restoration	Aquaculture, Introductions & Transfers & Transgenics	Mandatory Actions
EU – Spain (Asturias)				82							

The Review Group considered that EU – Spain (Asturias)’ revised Implementation Plan still requires some minor improvement to the responses to the ‘Aquaculture, Introductions & Transfers & Transgenics’ questions to achieve a satisfactory rating across all sections / areas of the Plan. It noted that there appears to be some confusion between *Gyrodactylus salaris* and sea lice emanating from fish farms because some responses requesting information on sea lice refer, instead, to *G. salaris*.

Positive Feedback from the Review Group: the Review Group welcomed the considerable effort of EU – Spain (Asturias) and its commitment to improving its Implementation Plan in 2023.

Questions on Salmon Management: following the 2021 review to EU – Spain (Asturias)’ Implementation Plan, the Review Group considered that the responses to questions in three of the four sections were fully satisfactory. However, following the revisions provided in 2023, the Review Group considered that further minor revision is still needed in the ‘Aquaculture, Introductions & Transfers & Transgenics’ section, where 82 % of responses were considered to be satisfactory by the Review Group. The Review Group has provided detailed feedback to each response that is considered to be unsatisfactory.

Threats / Challenges to Wild Salmon: in 2021 the Review Group considered that the identified threats and challenges to the management of wild Atlantic salmon identified under each theme all related clearly to NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. No changes were made to this section in 2023.

SMART Actions: in 2023 one action, Action A1, was revised. Following the 2021 review, three of the four ‘Management of Salmon Fisheries’ actions within the Plan, and one of the two ‘Habitat Protection and Restoration’ actions, were considered to be both SMART and satisfactory, i.e. the Review Group considered that those actions move EU – Spain (Asturias) clearly towards the implementation of NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. The fourth ‘Management of Salmon Fisheries’ action and the second ‘Habitat Protection and Restoration’ action were considered to be satisfactory but not SMART. Following its revision in 2023, the ‘Aquaculture, Introductions & Transfers & Transgenics’ action was still considered to be satisfactory but not SMART, so the Review Group again considered that this action can be considered to move EU – Spain (Asturias) clearly towards the implementation of NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines.

Mandatory Actions: no mandatory actions are required for EU – Spain (Asturias). In 2021, the section was, therefore, considered to be satisfactory.

In the following Evaluation Form, the Review Group has provided guidance on its recommendations for improvements.

Evaluation in 2023 of Revised Implementation Plans

Under NASCO's third reporting cycle the Review Group is asked to evaluate the Implementation Plans submitted by Parties / jurisdictions in three key areas of assessment, by:

- 1. identifying whether the answers by each Party / jurisdiction to the questions posed in the Implementation Plan template are satisfactory;*
- 2. identifying clearly that the threats and challenges to the management of wild Atlantic salmon identified under each theme are related to NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines; and*
- 3. assessing the description of each action to ensure that it adheres to the 'SMART' descriptors such that progress over time can be assessed objectively.*

This is described in detail in the 'Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of NASCO Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress', [CNL\(18\)49](#).

- 1. Answers to each question in the Implementation Plan template, [CNL\(18\)50](#), are to be assessed as:*
 - 1. Satisfactory answers / information;*
 - 2. Unsatisfactory (including unclear or incomplete answers / information or clear omissions or inadequacies).*
- 2. NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines as they apply to the third cycle of reporting are listed throughout the Implementation Plan template, [CNL\(18\)50](#).*
- 3. The Review Group will be required to assess the description of each action using the 'SMART' criteria laid out in the new Guidelines document, [CNL\(18\)49](#), thereby assessing the quality of each of the actions, not just how clearly the actions are stated.*

Additionally, in 2020, the Council has provided enhanced guidance to the Review Group in their 'Enhanced Guidance for the Review of Implementation Plans' ([CNL\(20\)55](#)) whereby each section / area of the Implementation Plan will be scored as satisfactory or unsatisfactory; the actions will also be assessed on their ability to move the Party / jurisdiction clearly towards the implementation of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines.

Through this process it will be possible to determine whether the Implementation Plan provides a fair and equitable basis for assessing the progress that the Party / jurisdiction will make in implementing NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines.

Where a section / area is deemed by the Review Group to be unsatisfactory, the Implementation Plan will be returned to the Party / jurisdiction. 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. The tables below, for each of the three main areas to be assessed, provide a template for evaluation in each case.

In 2021, Council made decisions which mean that 1) only the revised parts of any resubmitted IP need to be reviewed 2) aspects of the IP that are moving the Party / jurisdiction clearly towards the achievement of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines should be identified, and 3) significant improvements should be identified, to be communicated on the NASCO website and social media.

Party: European Union

Jurisdiction/Region: Spain (Asturias)

Assessment area 1. Are the questions posed in the Implementation Plan template answered satisfactorily?

#	Question in IP Template	Assessment (1 or 2)	Feedback on any improvements required (for answers assessed as 2)	Comments relating to previous review round: changed as requested by IP RG?
1. Introduction				
1.1	What are the objectives for the management of wild salmon?	1		
1.2	What reference points (e.g. conservation limits, management targets or other measures of abundance) are used to assess the status of stocks?	1		
1.3	What is the current status of stocks under the new classification system outlined in CNL(16)11?	1		
1.4	How is stock diversity (e.g. genetics, age composition, run-timing, etc.) taken into account in the management of salmon stocks?	1		
1.5	To provide a baseline for future comparison, what is the current and potential quantity of salmon habitat?	1		
1.6	What is the current extent of freshwater and marine salmonid aquaculture? <i>Append one or more maps showing the location of aquaculture facilities and aquaculture free zones in rivers and the sea.</i>	1		
1.7	Please describe the process used to consult NGOs and other stakeholders and industries in the development of this Implementation Plan.	1		
Overall score by Review Group for 1. Introduction			Satisfactory	

2. Management of Salmon Fisheries: <i>In this section please review the management approach to each of the fisheries in your jurisdiction (i.e. commercial, recreational and other fisheries) in line with the relevant NASCO Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines. For Parties / jurisdictions that prosecute mixed-stock fisheries, there should be at least one action related to their management.</i>				
2.1	What are the objectives for the management of the fisheries for wild salmon?	1		
2.2	What is the decision-making process for the management of salmon fisheries, including predetermined decisions taken under different stock conditions (e.g. the stock level at which regulations are triggered)?	1		
2.3	(a) Are fisheries permitted to operate on salmon stocks that are below their reference point (e.g. Conservation Limits)? If so, (b) how many such fisheries are	1		

	there and (c) what approach is taken to managing them that still promotes stock rebuilding?			
2.4	(a) Are there any mixed-stock salmon fisheries? If so, (b) how are these defined, (c) what was the mean catch in these fisheries in the last five years and (d) how are they managed to ensure that all the contributing stocks are meeting their conservation objectives?	1	The Review Group requested that a response is given to all parts of this question.	
2.5	How are socio-economic factors taken into account in making decisions on management of salmon fisheries?	1		
2.6	What is the current level of unreported catch and what measures are being taken to reduce this?	1	The Review Group noted that there are still no quantitative data to estimate unreported catch. The response to this question should be improved by clarifying the proposed measure.	
2.7	Has an assessment under the Six Tenets for Effective Management of an Atlantic Salmon Fishery been conducted? If so, (a) has the assessment been made available to the Secretariat and (b) what actions are planned to improve the monitoring and control of the fishery? (c) If the six tenets have not been applied, what is the timescale for doing so?	1		
Overall score by Review Group for 2. Management of Salmon Fisheries			Satisfactory	

3. Protection and Restoration of Salmon Habitat:				
<i>In this section please review the management approach to the protection and restoration of habitat in your jurisdiction in line with the relevant NASCO Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines.</i>				
3.1	How are risks to productive capacity identified and options for restoring degraded or lost salmon habitat prioritised, taking into account the principle of 'no net loss' and the need for inventories to provide baseline data?	1		
3.2	How are socio-economic factors taken into account in making decisions on salmon habitat management?	1		
3.3	What management measures are planned to protect wild Atlantic salmon and its habitats from (a) climate change and (b) invasive aquatic species?	1		
Overall score by Review Group for 3. Protection and Restoration of Salmon Habitat			Satisfactory	

<p>4. Management of Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics <i>Council has requested that for Parties / jurisdictions with salmon farms, there should be a greater focus on actions to minimise impacts of salmon farming on wild salmonid stocks. Each Party / jurisdiction with salmon farming should therefore include at least one action relating to sea lice management and at least one action relating to containment, providing quantitative data in Annual Progress Reports to demonstrate progress towards the international goals agreed by NASCO and the International Salmon Farmers Association (ISFA):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of farms to have effective sea lice management such that there is no increase in sea lice loads or lice-induced mortality of wild salmonids attributable to the farms; • 100% farmed fish to be retained in all production facilities. <p><i>In this section please provide information on all types of aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics (including freshwater hatcheries, smolt-rearing etc.</i></p>			
4.1	(a) Is the current policy concerning the protection of wild salmonids consistent with the international goals on sea lice and containment agreed by NASCO and ISFA? (b) If the current policy is not consistent with these international goals, when will current policy be adapted to ensure consistency with the international goals and what management measures are planned to ensure achievement of these goals and in what timescale?	(a) 1 (b) 2	The Review Group requested that the containment (fresh water) element of this question is also addressed.
4.2	(a) What quantifiable progress can be demonstrated towards the achievement of the international goals for 100% of farms to have effective sea lice management such that there is no increase in sea lice loads, or lice-induced mortality of wild salmonids attributable to sea lice? (b) How is this progress monitored, including monitoring of wild fish? (c) If progress cannot be demonstrated, what additional measures are proposed and in what timescale?	1	The Review Group welcomed the re-instatement of the text in this response, as requested in its 2021 review. Yes
4.3	(a) What quantifiable progress can be demonstrated towards the achievement of the international goals for achieving 100% containment in all (i) freshwater and (ii) marine aquaculture production facilities? (b) How is this progress monitored, including monitoring of wild fish (genetic introgression) and proportion of escaped farmed salmon in the spawning populations? (c) If progress cannot be demonstrated, what additional measures (e.g. use of sterile salmon in fish farming) are proposed and in what timescale?	1	The Review Group welcomed the changes to the responses in 4.3 b) and c). Yes
4.4	What adaptive management and / or scientific research is underway that could facilitate better achievement of NASCO's international goals for sea lice and containment such that the environmental impact on wild salmonids can be minimised?	1	The Review Group again noted that this question concerns sea lice and containment in salmon farms and is not a question about <i>Gyrodactylus salaris</i> . However, the Review Group noted there is no marine aquaculture and therefore assumes that sea lice should not be an issue. No

4.5	What is the approach for determining the location of aquaculture facilities in (a) freshwater and (b) marine environments to minimise the risks to wild salmonid stocks?	(a)2 (b)1	a) The Review Group considered that the question has not been answered and requested that EU – Spain (Asturias) outline the approach for determining the location of aquaculture facilities in fresh water.	No
4.6	What progress has been made to implement NASCO’s guidance on introductions, transfers and stocking?	1		
4.7	Is there (a) a requirement to evaluate thoroughly risks and benefits before undertaking any stocking programme and (b) a presumption against stocking for purely socio-political / economic reasons?	1		
4.8	What is the policy / strategy on use of transgenic salmon?	1	The Review Group understood from the revised answer that the policy is for no transgenics in EU – Spain (Asturias).	Yes
4.9	<i>For Members of the North-East Atlantic Commission only:</i> What measures are in place, or are planned, to implement the eleven recommendations contained in the ‘Road Map’ to enhance information exchange and co-operation on monitoring, research and measures to prevent the spread of <i>Gyrodactylus salaris</i> and eradicate it if introduced, including the development and testing of contingency plans?	2	The Review Group noted the North-East Atlantic Commission’s consideration that <i>Gyrodactylus salaris</i> is potentially a threat to all wild Atlantic salmon stocks. The Review Group noted the additional detail of disinfection and control / elimination. However, it also noted that the development and implementation of a plan for <i>G. salaris</i> , as detailed in the ‘Road Map’, is an agreed requirement for each member of the North-East Atlantic Commission.	No
Overall score by Review Group for 4. Management of Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics			Unsatisfactory	

Assessment area 2. Are the threats and challenges to the management of wild Atlantic salmon identified under each theme related clearly to NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines?

2.8 Threats identified to wild salmon and challenges for management associated with their exploitation in fisheries, including bycatch of salmon in fisheries targeting other species	Assessment (yes / no)	Feedback on any improvements required	Comments relating to previous review round: changed as requested by IP RG?
Threat / challenge F1	Yes		
Threat / challenge F2	Yes		
Threat / challenge F3	Yes		
Overall score by Review Group for 2.8: threats / challenges associated with exploitation in fisheries, including bycatch of salmon in fisheries targeting other species			Satisfactory

Copy and paste lines to add in other challenges in the relevant Implementation Plan

3.4 Threats identified to wild salmon and challenges for management in relation to estuarine and freshwater habitat.	Assessment (yes / no)	Feedback on any improvements required	Comments relating to previous review round: changed as requested by IP RG?
Threat / challenge H1	Yes		
Threat / challenge H2	Yes		
Overall score by Review Group for 3.4: threats / challenges in relation to estuarine and freshwater habitat			Satisfactory

Copy and paste lines to add in other challenges in the relevant Implementation Plan

4.10 Threats identified to wild salmon and challenges for management in relation to aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics.	Assessment (yes / no)	Feedback on any improvements required	Comments relating to previous review round: changed as requested by IP RG?
Threat / challenge A1	Yes		
Overall score by Review Group for 4.10: threats / challenges in relation to aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics			Satisfactory

Copy and paste lines to add in other challenges in the relevant Implementation Plan

Assessment area 3. Does each action adhere to the ‘SMART’ descriptors laid out in the new Guidelines document, CNL(18)49?

As a reminder, the ‘SMART’ approach includes reporting on both quantitative and qualitative information. Quantitative information is expected wherever possible and should be presented to demonstrate progress made over the period of the plan towards NASCO’s goals. This should be clear and concise. Where a deviation must be made from a quantitative metric, the reason for the deviation should be explained.

2.9 What SMART actions are planned during the period covered by this Implementation Plan (2019 – 2024) to address each of the threats and challenges identified in section 2.8 to implement NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines and demonstrate progress towards achievement of its goals and objectives for the management of salmon fisheries?								
#	Action in IP Template	Is the action clearly related to stated threat / challenge?	Is it ‘SMART’? (yes / no)	If ‘no’, which descriptor needs to be reflected more clearly in the action?	If the proposed monitoring is qualitative (as allowed in the Guidelines), is the reason and proposed non-quantitative alternative for monitoring progress acceptable?	Does the action move the Party / jurisdiction clearly towards the achievement of NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines?	Given the previous question, is the action considered satisfactory or unsatisfactory overall?	Comments relating to previous review round: changed as requested by IP RG?
F1	Increase vigilance to evaluate possible illegal fishing Although it is estimated that undeclared catches are very low, efforts will continue to maintain this situation.	Yes	Yes			Yes. The Review Group considered that this relates to CNL(09)43, section 2.2.	Satisfactory	
F2	Regulate river catches avoiding overfishing.	Yes	Yes			Yes. The Review Group considered that this	Satisfactory	

						relates to CNL(09)43, section 2.3.		
F3	Perform annual censuses (counts) broodstock salmon to estimate their number against fishing. This data allows to calculate a conservation limit.	Yes	Yes			Yes. The Review Group considered that this relates to CNL(09)43, section 2.4.	Satisfactory	
F4	Reinforce populations with repopulations of salmon fry.	No	No, not Relevant. Actions must relate clearly to the main threats and / or challenges identified in the Implementation Plan in a timely fashion, taking into account the provisions in NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines.	The Review Group requests clarification on whether fry or parr is stocked.		Yes. The Review Group considered that this relates to CNL(04)55, section 7.	Satisfactory	
Overall score by Review Group for 2.9: SMART actions to implement NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines and demonstrate progress towards achievement of its goals and objectives for the management of salmon fisheries							Satisfactory	

Copy and paste lines to add in other actions in the relevant Implementation Plan

3.5 What SMART actions are planned during the period covered by this Implementation Plan (2019 – 2024) to address each of the threats and challenges identified in section 3.4 to implement NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines and demonstrate progress towards achievement of its goals and objectives for the Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat?

#	Action in IP Template	Is the action clearly related to stated threat / challenge?	Is it 'SMART'? (yes / no)	If 'no', which descriptor needs to be reflected more clearly in the action?	If the proposed monitoring is qualitative (as allowed in the Guidelines), is the reason and proposed non-quantitative alternative for monitoring progress acceptable?	Does the action move the Party / jurisdiction clearly towards the achievement of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines?	Given the previous question, is the action considered satisfactory or unsatisfactory overall?	Comments relating to previous review round: changed as requested by IP RG?
H1	Program of cleaning and annual maintenance of the scales in mini-stations and obstacles to the ski lift of the salmon	Yes	Yes			Yes. The Review Group considered that this relates to CNL(10)51, section 3.5.	Satisfactory	
H2	Increase knowledge about the problem of predation, which is difficult to solve. Controls of <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> are performed.	Yes	No	'Measurable' – the action needs to be monitored to make it SMART. The Review Group considered that the outcome needs to be more clearly defined.		Yes. The Review Group considered that this relates to CNL(10)51, sections 3.5d & 3.8.	Satisfactory	
Overall score by Review Group for 3.5: SMART actions to implement NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines and demonstrate progress towards achievement of its goals and objectives for the Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat							Satisfactory	

Copy and paste lines to add in other actions in the relevant Implementation Plan

4.11 What SMART actions are planned during the period covered by this Implementation Plan (2019 – 2024) to address each of the threats and challenges identified in section 4.10 to implement NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines and demonstrate progress towards achievement of its goals and objectives for aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics?								
#	Action in IP Template	Is the action clearly related to stated threat / challenge?	Is it ‘SMART’? (yes / no)	If ‘no’, which descriptor needs to be reflected more clearly in the action?	If the proposed monitoring is qualitative (as allowed in the Guidelines), is the reason and proposed non-quantitative alternative for monitoring progress acceptable?	Does the action move the Party / jurisdiction clearly towards the achievement of NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines?	Given the previous question, is the action considered satisfactory or unsatisfactory overall?	Comments relating to previous review round: changed as requested by IP RG?
A1	Restocking	Yes	No	Specific and Measurable need to be reflected more clearly. The Review Group expects to see these SMART descriptors adequately addressed.		Yes The Review Group considered that this may relate to CNL(04)55.	Satisfactory	No
A2								
Overall score by Review Group for 4.11: SMART actions to implement NASCO’s Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines and demonstrate progress towards achievement of its goals and objectives for aquaculture, introductions and transfers, and transgenics							Satisfactory	

Copy and paste lines to add in other actions in the relevant Implementation Plan

Mandatory action check	Is such a mandatory action required for this Party / jurisdiction?	Is such an action contained in the Implementation Plan?
For Parties / jurisdictions that prosecute mixed-stock fisheries, there should be at least one action related to their management.	No	Not applicable

Each Party / jurisdiction with salmon farming should include at least one action relating to sea lice management.	No	Not applicable
Each Party / jurisdiction with salmon farming should include at least one action relating to containment.	No	Not applicable
Overall score by Review Group		Satisfactory

Positive Feedback

Are there any aspects of the IP, <i>in particular</i>, that move the Party / jurisdiction clearly towards the achievement of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines? (please state below)
<p>The Review Group considered that the following actions, in particular, move EU – Spain (Asturias) clearly towards the achievement of NASCO's Resolutions, Agreements and Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of Salmon Fisheries: F1, F2, F3 and F4; • Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Atlantic Salmon Habitat: H1 and H2; and • Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics: A1.

Are there any significant improvements by the Party / jurisdiction that could be communicated on the NASCO website and social media? (please state below)