

	<p style="text-align: center;">Council</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>NASCO Secretariat Environmental Policy</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CNL(25)21</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Agenda item 6.f)</p>
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NASCO Secretariat Environmental Policy

Purpose

This document is intended to provide the framework and overarching principles to guide the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability considerations into the NASCO Secretariat's activities, to enable the Secretariat to establish sustainable organizational, business and travel practices.

Decisions

Council may wish to:

- ask the Secretary to organize an energy audit of the NASCO Headquarters, using a maximum of £20,000 to be drawn from the Working Capital Fund.

Background

NASCO recognises the importance of developing policies and conducting its operations to be consistent with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals especially in those areas of sustainable business practices. This is supported by NASCO's public statement in 2022, [CNL\(22\)53rev](#), articulating its intention to reduce its overall carbon footprint, as well as Recommendation 41 from NASCO's third performance review, [CNL\(23\)17rev](#), that 'NASCO develops a NASCO Carbon Policy to ensure that NASCO's carbon emissions are in line with best practices on achieving carbon neutrality'.

In 2022 the NASCO Council agreed, [CNL\(22\)53rev](#), that the Annual Meetings should be organized to be face to face for participants, with a simple, cost-efficient virtual option for some delegates. By default, consideration would be given for inter-sessional meetings to be virtual, but the Chair and the Secretary, in consultation with the members, would determine the exact format. Where a face-to-face meeting was selected, a hybrid option would be available.

The NASCO headquarters is in Edinburgh, Scotland, UK and comes under initiatives in that country such as the [Heat in Buildings Strategy \(HiBS\)](#). In addition, businesses are encouraged to pledge to reduce their emissions, adopt sustainable business practices and support their staff to make more sustainable choices in their professional and private lives, and to adopt net zero business models.

Environmental change poses a significant threat to the natural world, societies, and economies. The consequences are far reaching and include extreme weather events and degradation of ecosystems. The NASCO Secretariat will continue to seek opportunities to reduce its environmental impact and enable its staff to make environmentally-conscious choices, especially in travel. The Secretariat recognises some form of emissions offsetting may be required in the future to continue providing its administrative duties.

Current Environmental Practice

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 forced NASCO to adjust its operations to have meetings online only for two years. Participants adapted to conducting meeting only through online platforms very successfully. In 2022 at the Edinburgh Annual Meeting it was recognised that some travel for meetings was desired, especially for the Annual Meeting, and the first step to reduce travel for inter-sessional meetings was taken. Since the 2023 Annual Meeting, NASCO inter-sessional meetings have been either entirely virtual or in-person with a hybrid option.

Numerous sustainability practices concerning NASCO's meetings have been implemented since the current Secretary started in post in late 2017, as follows:

- since the 2017 Annual Meeting the Secretariat has not provided hundreds of printed documents for the delegates, and participants have been encouraged to use digital documents;
- since the printing of Annual Meeting documents was stopped in 2018 there has been no need to courier them from NASCO Headquarters in Edinburgh to the meeting venue;
- since 2018, CD-ROMs containing the Annual Meeting reports are no longer created and posted to all delegates, neither are hard-bound copies of the reports;
- since 2018, the ICES advice is no longer printed, placed in plastic folders and posted to all delegates;
- since 2019, the Annual Meeting invitations and Annual Meeting brochure are sent by email, rather than printed and placed in plastic folders and posted;
- since 2019, all correspondence with delegates during the Annual Meeting is now by email, and no longer printed out and posted in delegates' mailboxes;
- printed documents are no longer provided for inter-sessional meetings for the Commissions, the Finance and Administration Committee, the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board, Steering Committee and Working Group meetings, with participants encouraged to use digital documents; and
- from 2024, hard copies of Special Session, or Theme-based Special Session Reports are no longer produced and printed.

Additionally, at NASCO Headquarters in Edinburgh the following practices have been implemented to enable more sustainable business operations:

- since 2015, all paper and card has been recycled through a commercial business;
- since late 2017, the emails in the NASCO inbox are no longer printed out to pass to the Secretary;
- in early 2018, a plumbed in, filtered-water dispenser was installed to negate the use of bottled water for staff and visitors;
- since 2020, all staff work using laptops, rather than desktop PCs;
- in 2020 an electronic letterhead was designed, removing the need to order paper with the NASCO letterhead;
- since 2022, secure cycle parking has been provided for two bicycles;
- emissions from staff commuting are now reduced with staff working from home two days per week;
- the majority of staff use public transport for their commute; and
- all lighting in the building is being replaced with LED lighting on a rolling basis.

Areas of Focus

In examining approaches to sustainability policies in various organizations and governments, there are four major categories of focus that cover all aspects of business practices for an office-based organization: travel and vehicles; procurement of goods and services; property and

workplaces; and climate-resilient operations. NASCO Secretariat business fits into the first three categories and this policy considers the following NASCO activities:

1. NASCO Headquarters building;
2. NASCO Secretariat office operations and the conduct of the Annual Meeting with a key objective to expand its sustainable business practices further; and
3. NASCO Secretariat travel, with a key objective to minimise environmental impacts of all travel associated with NASCO activities including the travel to NASCO meetings – Annual, inter-sessional, Steering Committee, Working / Review Group, organizing.

NASCO Headquarters

For operation of the NASCO Headquarters building, the primary focus needs to be on practices associated with using the building. To understand whether progress is being made to meet the objectives of this policy it would be necessary to establish a baseline for its practices and emissions. Annual reporting metrics could be established to track progress towards the sustainability goals.

One way of establishing a baseline would be to conduct an energy audit, or equivalent assessment, of the NASCO Headquarters building to assess current emissions performance and changes to building heating, utilities use and infrastructure that could reduce emissions and lower utility consumption. This could cost in the region of £15,000-£20,000. The Working Capital Fund was established as a reserve for the purpose of meeting unexpected non-budgeted or urgent costs. The costs for an energy audit could be met from this Fund, which would be in line with its purpose.

Key actions are to:

- monitor utilities consumption;
- establish baselines of emissions, heat loss and utilities consumption;
- reduce the emissions associated with heating the building, which burns natural gas;
- reduce heat loss from the building; and
- conduct annual reporting against the baselines.

NASCO Secretariat Office Operations and the Conduct of the Annual Meeting

In addition to the sustainable practices already established and implemented, **key actions** are to:

- ensure continued roll out of electronic records document management system and online services initiatives to reduce the need for paper;
- shutdown PCs and electronic equipment that are not required to be powered up 24 / 7 when not in use;
- improve environmental awareness among staff and promote green housekeeping issues;
- eliminate single-use plastics;
- where appropriate, increase recycling options;
- use environmentally friendly products in bathroom and kitchen areas; and
- maintain a record of actions to track the progress of this policy.

NASCO Secretariat Travel

The primary focus should be on emissions from forms of transport of NASCO staff travelling to NASCO meetings and collated to present an annual estimation of the environmental impact of all NASCO staff travel.

For calculating emissions for travel, a standard and globally accepted calculator should be used and should include all forms of transportation, not just flights, i.e. train, car etc.

Key actions on travel are to:

- encourage minimal travel and, where possible, ensure travel is by public transport rather than private car, unless cycling or walking, also taking into consideration staff safety and the balance of efficiency versus environmental impacts; and
- monitor travel details, including emissions, and keep records as appropriate (start of an Environmental Management System).

Council Decision

To meet Recommendation 41 from the third performance review, [CNL\(23\)17rev](#), that ‘NASCO develops a NASCO Carbon Policy to ensure that NASCO’s carbon emissions are in line with best practices on achieving carbon neutrality’ and to further enhance the NASCO Secretariat’s environmental sustainability, Council may wish to:

- ask the Secretary to organize an energy audit of the NASCO Headquarters, using a maximum of £20,000 to be drawn from the Working Capital Fund.

Secretariat
Edinburgh
16 May 2025