



**The North Atlantic Salmon
Conservation Organization**

**Report of the Forty-Second Annual Meeting of the
Finance and Administration Committee**

Cardiff Holland House Hotel & Spa by Sunday, Cardiff, Wales

2 & 5 June 2025

Chair: **Seamus Connor (United Kingdom)**

Vice-Chair: **Heidi Hansen (Norway)**

Secretary: **Emma Hatfield**

***Report of the Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee of the
North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization***

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The Chair, Seamus Connor (UK), opened the meeting.
- 1.2 A list of participants is contained in Annex 1.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) adopted its Agenda, FAC(25)07 (Annex 2).

3. 2024 Audited Accounts

- 3.1 The Chair noted that the Audited Accounts for 2024, [FAC\(25\)02](#), were circulated to the President, Heads of Delegations and FAC members on 14 February 2025.
- 3.2 The Secretary noted that the Working Capital Fund had been replenished almost back up to its ceiling of £200,000, on the basis that the Russian Federation's contribution for 2024 would be received in 2025. If it is not received for some reason, the Working Capital Fund will remain at £180,000 in 2025. In addition, the Secretary raised that NASCO had considerable sums under 'debtors' in the Audited Accounts, such as historical VAT repayments owed.
- 3.3 The Russian Federation raised that it faced challenges in paying its contribution for 2024 and 2025 but is investigating ways to make its payments.
- 3.4 The UK asked for clarification on the state of the 2024 accounts as to whether NASCO is in surplus or deficit or neither. The Secretary confirmed that NASCO had no surplus or deficit for 2024.
- 3.5 The FAC agreed to accept the 2024 Audited Accounts and to recommend to Council that they be adopted.

4. Report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee

- 4.1 The Chair reminded the Committee that, at its Inter-Sessional Meeting in April 2024, the FAC had recommended a process and timeline for a full review of NASCO's Staff Rules and Staff Fund Rules, such that:
 - the FAC would work, inter-sessionally through a small working group and by correspondence to revise the full Staff Rules and Staff Fund Rules by the end of November 2024;
 - the FAC would engage the legal firm Gunnercooke LLP to provide legal counsel to ensure compliance with relevant employment law and modern working practice, to be provided by the end of January 2025; and
 - the FAC would meet provisionally in March 2025 to finalise and agree the revised staff rules to enable them to be recommended to Council for their adoption at the 2025 Annual Meeting.

- 4.2 The Chair also noted that during the 2024 Annual Meeting of the FAC, [CNL\(24\)04](#), it was proposed that the small working group of the FAC could incorporate language into the Staff Rule revisions to include the possible hiring of interns at NASCO, in line with many International Organizations, given that the current Staff Rules do not support the employment of interns.
- 4.3 The Chair reminded the FAC that this process had been followed and that it had recommended a 'Proposed Staff Handbook & Staff Rules', FACIS(25)07, and 'Proposed NASCO Internship Programme', FACIS(25)08, for adoption by Council. He advised the FAC that Council would consider this in the following days and the FAC did not need to take any further action at this point.

5. Relationship with ICES

- 5.1 The Chair noted that NASCO's relationship with ICES was a standing item on the FAC's Agenda. However, in 2022, Council had asked the Secretary to approach ICES to investigate a more streamlined approach / presentation of the ICES Advice. This issue is still being dealt with in Council, which would consider an 'Update on the Streamlining of the ICES Advice', [CNL\(25\)07](#), at its 2025 Annual Meeting. Therefore, no further action was required at this time.

6. MoU with the OSPAR Commission

- 6.1 The Chair noted that the MoU between NASCO and the OSPAR Commission came into effect in 2013. He referred the FAC to a paper on this item entitled 'MoU with the OSPAR Commission', [FAC\(25\)05](#) which contained issues of interest to NASCO.
- 6.2 The Chair highlighted item 2 of that report regarding the OSPAR Status Assessment of Salmon. He indicated that the OSPAR Secretariat had asked whether members of NASCO would be willing to engage in the process when the next Status Assessment is prepared.
- 6.3 The Secretary raised that the last Status Assessment of salmon that was done was a much more successful exercise than it might have been had it not involved scientists that work under the NASCO umbrella. This enabled the use of the full ICES data rather than the IUCN data being proposed by OSPAR. The Secretary asked that those Parties that are Contracting Parties to OSPAR assess who could be involved in the exercise.

7. Consideration of the 2026 Draft Budget, Schedule of Contributions and Five-year Budgeting Plan

- 7.1 The Chair noted that Article 16.1 of the Convention states 'the Council shall adopt an annual budget'. He raised that he was aware of concerns from Parties around the 2026 Draft Budget and costs for hosting the Annual Meeting. He noted, that, given these particular issues, the task before the FAC was to consider cost-saving options and to agree a budget for 2026 based on the budget for 2025 plus inflation.
- 7.2 He asked the Secretary to present information on the 2026 Draft Budget, the Schedule of Contributions and the Five-Year Budgeting Plan. The Secretary referred the Committee to document [FAC\(25\)04](#) and noted that those items that are based on inflation are based on the 2025 Consumer Price Index for the UK published by the UK Government's Treasury using the figure of 3.1%. Anything presented in the Draft Budget that was increased by that much, therefore, had no increase in real terms.
- 7.3 The Secretary informed the FAC that the 2026 budgeted expenditure (£817,710) represents a 14.7% increase compared to that in the 2025 Budget (£713,220) and is

higher (7%) in real terms than that anticipated in the 2025 – 2029 Budgeting Plan for 2026 (£747,449). She noted that the increase in costs was due to the fact that no offer to host the 2026 Annual Meeting had been received. The 2026 Draft Budget, therefore, included the costs for the Secretariat to host the 2026 Annual Meeting in Scotland. Annex 1 of the Draft Budget paper included an exploration of costs related to hosting the 2026 Annual Meeting in Scotland and how the estimated costs of £95,000 put forward were reached.

- 7.4 The Secretary advised the FAC that the 2024 Audited Accounts ([FAC\(25\)02](#)) indicated that the Working Capital Fund, the Contractual Obligation Fund and the Recruitment Fund are all below their respective ceilings of £200,000, £250,000 and £60,000, at £197,500, £220,953 and £37,000 respectively. Despite this, the Organization's financial position remains sound.
- 7.5 The Secretary raised that in a Heads of Delegation meeting on the previous day, some Parties had indicated that they could not support the extent of increase in the 2026 Draft Budget given how much difference it made to their contributions. The Secretary had, therefore, been asked to investigate options to reduce the costs of the 2026 Annual Meeting from £95,000, within the following parameters:
- the minimum requirements for the 2026 Annual Meeting, with a meeting for 100 people in the agreed dates in June 2026 at the Macdonald Aviemore Resort in Scotland, were proposed to be:
 - provide two large delegation breakout rooms only, with priority access to NASCO Parties;
 - provide minimal hybrid requirements so participation is possible, but basic;
 - provide basic AV – focusing on good sound for all participants but one large screen for top table meeting participants;
 - use plenary room – in plenary layout – for Special Session – to save theatre-style room hire costs;
 - cap meetings, including HoDs, at five days;
 - no longer provide free lunches for delegates; and
 - no longer provide NASCO-funded hospitality, including the Annual Meeting dinner.
- 7.6 The Secretary noted that the 2025 budget was £713,220. Capping this sum at inflation would give £735,330. The proposed 2026 draft budget figure is £817,710. Savings of £82,380 needed to be found to bring the budget down to £735,330.
- 7.7 Before reviewing Annual Meeting costs that could be reduced, the Secretary reviewed the expenditure by sub-section in the 2026 Draft Budget (Table 3 of document [FAC\(25\)04](#)) to highlight items that could be reduced through the following savings:
- 1.2 'Temporary staff costs' – removing £10,500 (by deferring the initiation of the new internship programme);
 - 2.2 'Official travel and subsistence' – removing £10,000;
 - 5.2 'Cost of other meetings' – removing £5,000; and
 - 7.4 'Communications, professional support and design' – reducing by £13,000 costs intended for communication activities, with costs for translations retained;

- 7.8 These reductions would result in a total reduction of £38,500 (Annex 3).
- 7.9 Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) raised concern that there would be no money for outreach. The Secretary noted that the elements for consultancy costs and agency / temporary staff would be retained under 'Temporary staff costs'. The element removed was the £10,500 proposed for the internship programme proposed to Council. The UK raised that following the 2026 Annual Meeting, the Secretariat could consider looking at different models for supporting the Annual Meetings, even if savings were small from several different budget items.
- 7.10 The Secretary noted that there would need to be an initial task to reduce costs of the 2026 Annual Meeting, after which NASCO could consider how to change the model going forward. With no offers to host the Annual Meeting forthcoming, the Secretariat expected to host it for the next two years if not more. The Secretary raised that it would be advisable to retain the current model of attendance of approximately 100 delegates to ensure good business for the hotel.
- 7.11 With a total saving of £82,380 required, following the proposed reductions of £38,500 in budget sub-section costs, a further saving of approximately £43,500 would be needed on Annual Meeting costs. The Secretary put forward a list of Annual Meeting costs that could be reduced in 2026, including revised services provided by the Aviemore hotel and the technical support PSA, (Annex 4) to give the following provisional savings:
- replacing the daily delegate rate, which included meeting room, lunch and refreshment costs, with meeting room hire only and a basic refreshment package: ~ £11,000 saving;
 - reducing breakout rooms to two plus the Secretariat Office: ~ £11,000 saving;
 - no dinner and hospitality: ~ £8,000 saving; and
 - reduced audio-visual equipment and services from PSA: ~£13,500 saving.
- The above savings total ~£43,500, which combined with the previous proposed savings in Secretariat costs would result in a Draft Budget for 2026 that would be roughly equivalent to NASCO's 2025 budget raised by inflation. The Secretary noted that it may not be possible to provide final details within the timing of this Annual Meeting and agreement on the 2026 detailed budget may be required inter-sessionally.
- 7.12 The Secretary also raised that NASCO would have two unexpected sources of income in 2025. The first would be a reimbursement of Value Added Tax which totals £22,400, which had already been received. Another source was due to the NASCO Secretariat's only part-time staff member moving out of the UK income tax system under HMRC into the NASCO tax system. This would result in the staff member receiving a tax rebate from the HMRC, part of which was then due to NASCO.
- 7.13 The FAC members had some discussion about not having to be as restrictive for the 2026 Annual Meeting for e.g. tea / coffee refreshments, depending on the extent of possible savings that could be made elsewhere and any additional income received. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) stated it could support the capped budget and supported the Secretariat working on this to present to Council when ready. It also noted that if extensive savings were available on Annual Meeting costs, consideration should be given to providing guidelines on how much to reduce costs other than Annual Meeting costs. The UK noted that 2026 could be considered a transition year to a new model for Annual Meetings and it should be understood that

NASCO intended to change further following that.

- 7.13 The FAC had a discussion on the 2026 contributions with a budget capped at £735,330, i.e. the 2025 budget raised by inflation. The Secretary noted that the contributions for each Party had been calculated in accordance with Article 16, paragraph 2 of the Convention. The 2025 contributions had been recalculated to take account of the difference in the provisional and confirmed 2023 catch statistics and the appropriate adjustments had been made to the 2026 contributions. She reminded the FAC that changes in the contributions can occur even with stable budgets when a Party's proportion of the total catch changes.
- 7.14 The EU raised that even capping the Draft Budget according to inflation would see the individual contribution from the EU increase substantially compared to 2025, and was still an increase of some 25%, which the EU was not in position to support. The Secretary raised that increases in contributions are not in line with inflation, rather they are due to a Party's relative share of catch in relation to the other Parties.
- 7.15 The Chair raised that he understood the FAC had requested a revised Draft Budget for 2026 that was in line with the 2025 Budget plus inflation. He noted that the Secretary had identified savings on the Annual Meeting and on other costs, and some additional income, which all combined to more than meet the deficit between the original Draft Budget for 2026 and the amount equal to the 2025 budget plus inflation. All FAC members with the exception of the EU stated they could agree to a Draft Budget for 2026 that was equal to the 2025 budget plus inflation. Canada proposed leaving the agenda item open and reconvening later to allow the EU to confirm its position.
- 7.16 The Secretary noted that while savings had been made for the Draft Budget for 2026 and could be considered for the 2027 budget, careful consideration should be given to how to populate the 2027 forecast budget given the cuts for 2026. Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland) raised that it was important to have funds for outreach, which could be less than the proposals put forward to Council at this Annual Meeting and, therefore, equivalent to a saving.
- 7.17 The FAC agreed to keep Agenda Item 7 on the 2026 Draft Budget and the 2027 Forecast Budget, [FAC\(25\)04](#), open and reconvene at a later day in the Annual Meeting to have as much accurate information as possible on costings for the 2026 Annual Meeting to enable a budget for 2026 to be recommended to Council.
- 7.18 The FAC reconvened for a second meeting in which it agreed to recommend that the 2026 budget be capped at the 2025 Budget raised by inflation, i.e. £735,330. It also recommended that the detailed budget for 2026 be agreed in Council.

8. Other Business

- 8.1 The Chair asked if any FAC members wished to raise any other business.
- 8.2 Iceland raised that it had submitted a paper on the inclusion of ranched salmon in its catch for the calculation of its contribution, which was a topic it had tabled before leaving NASCO in 2009. The Secretary noted that the 1993 paper 'Minimum Standard for Catch Statistics', [CNL\(93\)51](#), states:

'The Atlantic Salmon Catch Statistics of the Parties to the NASCO Convention should:

...

- *include returns to ranching units*

...’

- 8.3 She also noted that Article 1 of the Convention states that:

‘The Convention applies to salmon stocks which migrate beyond areas of fisheries jurisdiction of coastal States of the Atlantic Ocean north of 36° latitude through their migratory range’

- 8.3 Iceland noted that convention change could be considered. The United States raised that a better understanding of what ‘ranch salmon’ is would be informative and whether other Parties included ranch salmon in their catches. The Secretary informed the FAC that Sweden also included ranch fish in its nominal catches. Norway raised that it included escaped farmed salmon and salmon originating from smolt releases e.g. to stock heavily regulated rivers, with both categories included in its nominal catch figures.
- 8.4 Iceland agreed it was content for FAC to note its paper and proceed.
- 8.5 At the second meeting of the FAC, the Chair announced that he would be stepping away from his position as FAC Chair from the end of the 2025 Annual Meeting given that he had been elected as NASCO President, with effect from the close of the Meeting.
- 8.6 The FAC elected Rebecca Wintering (USA) as its Chair (proposed by Canada, seconded by the EU) for a period of two years, to commence from the close of the 2025 Annual Meeting.
- 8.7 The FAC elected Dale Marsden (Canada) as its Vice-Chair (proposed by the United States, seconded by Norway) for a period of two years, to commence from the close of the 2025 Annual Meeting.

9. Report of the Meeting

- 9.1 The FAC agreed the Report of the Meeting.

10. Close of the Meeting

- 10.1 The Chair thanked participants for their contributions and closed the meeting.

2025 FAC List of Participants

Canada

*Nicole Bouchard
Dale Marsden

Denmark (In respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)

*Augusta Jerimiassen
Katrine Kærgaard

European Union

*Ignacio Granell

Iceland

*Kristján Freyr Helgason
Guðni Magnús Eiríksson

Norway

*Heidi Hansen (Vice-Chair)
Håvard Vedeler Nilsen
Julie Gjørtz Howden

Russian Federation

*Anna Shulaeva
Ekaterina Kazantseva

UK

*Catherine Perez
Charlotte Beardwell
Seamus Connor (Chair)

USA

*David Hogan (virtual participant)
Shannon Dionne
Mahvish Madad (virtual participant)

Secretariat

Emma Hatfield
Clare Cavers

*FAC Member

FAC(25)07

Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee

Holland House Hotel & Spa by Sunday, Cardiff, Wales

2 June 2025

Agenda

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3. 2024 Audited Accounts
4. Report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee
5. Relationship with ICES
6. MoU with the OSPAR Commission
7. Consideration of the 2025 Draft Budget, Schedule of Contributions and Five-year Budgeting Plan
8. Other Business
9. Report of the Meeting
10. Close of the Meeting

Table to show the savings incurred through the reduction in costs at the Aviemore hotel for the 2026 Annual Meeting

	Daily Delegate Rate pp	Breakout Rooms	SSID Wi-Fi	Dinner (incl drinks)	Other hospitality	IT support	General AV Costs	Hybrid Costs	Total Costs
Original Costings	£23,500	£17,505	£1,188	£6,325	£1,735	£1,400	£32,500	£10,000	£94,153
Reduced Costings	£12,450	£6,650	£1,188	£0	£0	£1,400	£20,327	£8,629	£50,644
Savings	£11,050	£10,855	£0	£6,325	£1,735	£0	£12,173	£1,371	£43,509

Table to show the savings incurred through the reduction both in budget costs and in meeting costs for the Aviemore hotel for the 2026 Annual Meeting

Budget Head	Description				
		Draft 2026	Budget Adjustment Only	Savings from Budget adjustment	Budget adjustment including revised hotel costs (see Annex 1)
1	Staff related costs	443150	432650	10500	432650
2	Travel & subsistence	28500	18500	10000	18500
3	Research & advice	78500	78500	0	78500
4	Contribution to Working Capital	0	0	0	0
5	Meetings	105500	100500	5000	56644
6	Office supplies,printing & translations	12950	12950	0	12950
7	Communications	33500	20500	13000	20500
8	Headquarters property	53510	53510	0	53510
9	Office furniture & equipment	1600	1600	0	1600
10	Audit & other expenses	22500	22500	0	22500
11	International Co-operative Research	0	0	0	0
12	Contribution to Contractual Obligation Fund	30000	30000	0	30000
13	Contribution to Recruitment Fund	5000	5000	0	5000
14	Training	3000	3000	0	3000
15	Special Funds	0	0	0	0
	Total	817710	779210	38500	735354
16	Contributions of the Contracting Parties	757710	719210		675354
17	Interest received on General fund	1000	1000		1000
18	Income from Headquarters property	59000	59000		59000
19	Surplus or deficit from 2024	0	0		0
	Total	817710	779210		735354