

Report of the December 2025 Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Council

NASCO HQ, Edinburgh (hybrid meeting)

10-11 December 2025

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 The President, Seamus Connor (UK), opened the meeting and made a statement on behalf of the Organization.
- 1.2 The Opening Session did not include verbal Opening Statements by the Parties and Observers.
- 1.3 A list of participants at the December 2025 Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Council is given in Annex 1.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- 2.1 The Council adopted its Agenda, [CNL_IS\(25\)05](#) (Annex 2).

3. Annual Meeting Model

- 3.1 The President noted that at the Annual Meeting, [CNL\(25\)80rev](#), the following decisions were made:

‘4.17 Council agreed to:

- a ceiling for the 2027 Budget consisting of the 2026 Budget plus inflation;*
- task the Secretariat to review NASCO’s meeting model for 2027 and to revert to Council with a proposal in advance of an inter-sessional meeting of the Council which may be scheduled before the end of 2025. This review should provide Council with a discussion document, outlining a limited number of meeting model options with a recommendation on the way forward based on an analysis of the options outlined; and*
- to task the Secretary to also prepare a Forecast Budget for 2027 and a five-year Budgeting Plan for 2026 – 2030, also to be discussed at the Council inter-sessional meeting.’*

- 3.2 The President reminded Council that the primary purpose of the Inter-Sessional Meeting is to discuss a number of alternative Annual Meeting models for 2027 onwards and to agree on one, based on which a Forecast Budget for 2027 could be agreed.
- 3.3 The President informed Council that in preparation for the discussion on Annual Meeting models, 12 other RFMO / IGO Secretariats have been consulted with a questionnaire on the details of their annual meetings. The responses to the questionnaire had been used alongside the requirements of the NASCO [Convention](#), the NASCO Ten-Year Strategy, [CNL\(24\)71rev](#), and supporting Action Plan, [CNL\(25\)79](#), the agreed 2026 NASCO revised Annual Meeting model ([FAC\(25\)10](#) paragraph 7.5) and

budgetary constraints to develop a proposal of model options. These meeting model options are outlined in seven Recommendations in ‘NASCO’s Annual Meeting Model Analysis, Review and Recommendations’, [CNL IS\(25\)02](#).

- 3.4 The Secretary presented the seven Recommendations of the meeting model analysis for review and discussion (Annex 3). The Parties supported Recommendation 1, to maintain NASCO’s current annual meeting frequency.
- 3.5 Several Parties identified the benefit of in-person meetings, especially when engaging with other Parties and with non-Party delegates such as NGOs and IPRIs. It was noted that the NASCO Annual Meeting is a unique forum that facilitates wide-ranging knowledge exchange and collaboration among all those concerned with the management and conservation of wild Atlantic salmon.
- 3.6 Discussion of Recommendation 2 identified that the timing of the Annual Meeting is limited by various factors, such as the timing of ICES advice and the time taken to develop, agree and implement regulatory measure(s) for the West Greenland fishery. The constraints imposed by these factors limited the window to host the Annual Meeting to the last week of May and the first week of June.
- 3.7 In relation to Recommendation 3 on the meeting format, Council decided that Annual Meetings should be held face-to-face, with a hybrid option available. The financial benefits of virtual meetings were recognised; however, NASCO’s experience indicated that, to accommodate different time zones, the meeting period would need to be significantly extended, and that it was often challenging to complete tasks in a timely manner. The discussion also identified face-to-face meetings as the most appropriate forum to facilitate the implementation of NASCO’s Ten-Year Strategy, [CNL\(24\)71rev](#), and its Communications and Outreach Strategy, [CNL\(25\)54](#). To improve efficiency and to facilitate more time for discussion, it was agreed that meeting reports would be more succinct and focused on agreed decisions and supporting rationale. It was decided that the final review and approval of NASCO’s Report of the Annual Meeting at Council and the Commissions’ Reports would consider only material changes, with the Secretariat tasked with reviewing and implementing editorial changes as required.
- 3.8 Also in relation to Recommendation 3, the Council requested that the Secretariat review the agendas for the Commissions’ meetings and, where possible, shorten the time allocated to enable more strategic items to be discussed by the Council in plenary.
- 3.9 Under Recommendation 4, the Council agreed that an initial Heads of Delegation meeting would take place on the evening (usually Monday) in advance of the Annual Meeting, with a follow-up meeting on the mid-meeting (usually Wednesday) lunchtime. The Council also agreed that there should be some flexibility if an additional meeting is required.
- 3.10 Under Recommendations 5 and based on previous discussions, Council agreed to continue with the current meeting model, i.e. Parties may offer to host but as a default NASCO would host the Annual Meeting. Council also agreed to establish a separate Annual Meeting Fund, to be used solely by the Secretariat when it is required to host the Annual Meeting. It was also decided that this Fund would be populated exclusively from within the existing annual budget provision, i.e. there would be no additional funds requested from the Parties.
- 3.11 Under Recommendation 6, in an effort to decrease costs, particularly in budget-constrained times, the Council agreed for the Secretariat to draft a document outlining a Minimum Meeting Model Standard, following a review of the 2026 Annual Meeting.

The Minimum Meeting Model Standard would be presented to Council for agreement by correspondence.

- 3.12 A discussion took place regarding potentially charging non-Party delegates for attending the Annual Meeting. The NGO Co-Chairs raised concerns that introducing costs to attend the Annual Meeting could limit attendance for many NGOs and IPRIIs, particularly those from smaller organizations. Council agreed that this issue would be discussed at the 2026 Annual Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC).
- 3.13 In the discussion of the size of NASCO meetings under Recommendation 7, Parties noted that Observer involvement in NASCO is critical in bringing salmon up the political agenda and is essential in the delivery of NASCO's Action Plan, [CNL\(25\)79](#), and its Communications and Outreach Strategy, [CNL\(25\)54](#). Council agreed, therefore, continued encouragement of full participation by Parties / jurisdictions, International Governmental Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions.
- 3.14 Parties noted that accepting the above recommendations is subject to their affordability. If the Secretariat hosts the 2027 Annual Meeting, or future meetings, then meeting format may need to be revisited to ensure it is affordable for the organization.
- 3.15 Council agreed to adopt, subject to their affordability:
- Recommendation 1: NASCO retain its current annual meeting frequency to ensure alignment with the obligations required under the [NASCO Convention](#) and to facilitate the timely advancement of strategic priorities;
 - Recommendation 2: The NASCO Annual Meeting to be scheduled to occur from the last full week of May but no later than the first week of June. The location determined by the Party / jurisdiction hosting or in the absence of a host, the default arrangement will be for the NASCO Secretariat to organise the meeting;
 - Recommendation 3: NASCO continues to convene face-to-face Annual Meetings scheduled for at least 4.5 days. The current hybrid option will remain available for delegates attending. It was agreed to increase efficiency at the final session of the Council. The final review and approval of NASCO's Report of the Annual Meeting at Council and the Commissions' Reports only considers material changes, with the Secretariat to review editorial changes. Consideration should also be given to the duration of the Commissions, FAC and Board Meetings to focus on Action Plan delivery. The Minutes should focus on agreed actions and the rationale for the decisions taken, to reduce the overall length of the documents;
 - Recommendation 4: To enhance the overall efficiency of the Annual Meeting, it was agreed to hold Heads of Delegation meetings on the evening (usually Monday) in advance of the Annual Meeting, with a follow-up mid-meeting (usually Wednesday) at lunchtime and to have a potential for any other Heads of Delegation meetings as required;
 - Recommendation 5: NASCO maintain its current model, continuing to offer Parties and jurisdictions the opportunity to host the Annual Meeting. In the absence of a host, the Secretariat will assume responsibility for organising the event. To facilitate the latter scenario, the establishment of a dedicated Annual Meeting fund was

agreed. This fund may be populated from the overall NASCO budget and will not require additional dedicated funds from the Parties;

- Recommendation 6: Based on the provisions and experience of the 2026 Annual Meeting, NASCO will adopt a baseline standard for the Annual Meeting. This standard should be minimal, designed to meet essential Annual Meeting requirements while aligning with constrained budgets. The issue of potentially charging non-Party delegates for attending the Annual Meeting was raised and was agreed to be discussed at the 2026 FAC Annual Meeting; and
- Recommendation 7: The Council recommends continued encouragement of full participation by Parties / jurisdictions, International Governmental Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions to enable NASCO to meet the Objectives of its Ten-Year Strategy, [CNL\(24\)71rev](#), and to align with its Communications and Outreach Strategy, [CNL\(25\)54](#).

4. 2027 Forecast Budget and 2026-2030 Budget Plans

- 4.1 The Secretary raised that there has been a delay in the payment of the Russian Federation's Contributions for 2024 and 2025. He further noted that this has the potential to impact NASCO's 2026 budget and the forecast Budgets to be discussed under this agenda item. The potential financial impacts on NASCO would materialise if the outstanding Russian Federation payments are not made by year-end, when the accounts will be finalised and subject to Audit in February 2026.
- 4.2 Following discussion, Council agreed to request the Secretariat continue its engagement with the Russian Federation to secure the outstanding contributions. If payments are not made, then Council agreed to hold an intersessional meeting of the FAC to review the status of contributions for 2024, 2025, and 2026, the Audit findings, and any potential impacts on the 2026 budget. This meeting should be scheduled in the last week of March 2026.
- 4.3 Extensive discussion of the different 2027 Forecast Budget scenarios presented in Table 1 of the background paper 'Draft 2027 Forecast Budget and Five-Year (2026 – 2030) Budgeting Plan', CNL_IS(25)03 was held. Several Parties raised concerns about the current shortfall in the Contractual Obligation Fund, which is growing each year. It was noted that the forecast model and budget plan presented will not address these concerns. The need to maintain the Working Capital Fund was also raised as important and necessary.
- 4.4 The Council agreed to adopt the forecast model associated with the scenario of NASCO hosting the 2027 Annual Meeting. The Council were clear in making this decision that they wanted to acknowledge the ongoing financial uncertainties discussed in paragraph 4.2 and the planned intersessional meeting of the FAC.
- 4.5 In relation to the Five-Year Forecast in Table 2 of the background paper 'Draft 2027 Forecast Budget and Five-Year (2026 – 2030) Budgeting Plan', [CNL_IS\(25\)03rev](#), Council agreed to the overall Forecast Budgets, as set out at the bottom of Tables 1 and 2, but had difficulty in agreeing the individual budget line items due to the ongoing financial uncertainties. Council decided that the FAC intersessional meeting would review Council priorities to make recommendations on future budget allocations.
- 4.6 Council agreed:

- the Secretariat continue to work with the Russian Federation to secure payment for the outstanding contributions for 2024 and 2025;
- that should these payments not be secured by the end of December 2025 then the NASCO FAC should meet intersessionally in the last week of March 2026 online to review the status of contributions for 2024, 2025, and 2026, the Audit findings, and any potential impacts on the 2026 budget;
- to approve a Forecast Budget for 2027 as shown in Table 1 of the background paper ‘Draft 2027 Forecast Budget and Five-Year (2026 – 2030) Budgeting Plan’, [CNL IS\(25\)03rev](#);
- to approve the overall Forecast Budgets, as set out at the bottom of Table 2 in the background paper ‘Draft 2027 Forecast Budget and Five-Year (2026 – 2030) Budgeting Plan’, [CNL IS\(25\)03rev](#); and
- to request the FAC review Council priorities and make recommendations on future budget allocations to individual budget line items for Council review. Based on this analysis, the FAC are further requested to review and make recommendations on the details of a five-year budgeting plan for 2026-2030.

5. NASCO Annual Meeting Paper Numbers

- 5.1 The President noted that at the 2025 Annual Meeting, concerns had been raised by a Party about the current practice within NASCO to allocate Council / Commission / FAC / Board numbers to all papers referenced in NASCO’s Annual Meetings, including those tabled by individual Parties / jurisdictions.
- 5.2 The Assistant Secretary presented several examples of how other RFMOs presented papers produced by their Secretariats and by external bodies, and potential options for NASCO to take forward. She also raised the possibility of deferring the decision to the Secretariat.
- 5.3 Parties raised that being able to find papers, through a reference number, was important, and that simplicity would be welcomed.
- 5.4 Council agreed to:
 - defer to the Secretariat to decide on a numbering / header system for papers tabled by individual Parties / jurisdictions and other bodies external to the NASCO Secretariat.

6. Other Business

- 6.1 No other business was raised.

7. Report of the Meeting

- 7.1 The Council agreed the report of its Meeting by correspondence.

8. Close of the Meeting

- 8.1 The President closed the December 2025 Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Council of NASCO.

List of Participants for December Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Council

***Denotes Head of Delegation**

Canada

*Nicole Bouchard – virtual
William Harris – virtual

Denmark (In respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)

*Katrine Kærgaard – virtual
Sverri Skaalum Joensen – virtual
Augusta Jerimiassen – virtual

European Union

*Ignacio Granell
Eithne Brown – virtual
Catherine McGinty – virtual

Iceland

*Kristján Freyr Helgason

Norway

*Raoul Bierach
Heidi Hansen

Russian Federation

*Elena Basova – virtual
Andrei Chesnakov – virtual

UK

*Ruth Allin
Charlotte Beardwell
Seamus Connor

US

*Shannon Dionne
Rebecca Wintering
Dan Kircheis – virtual
Steve Gephard – virtual

Indigenous Peoples' Representatives and Individuals

Sharri Venno – virtual

Non-Governmental Organizations

**** Denotes NGO Co-Chairs**

Heinz Ackman – virtual

Maria Ackman – virtual

Mark Boyden – virtual

Thomas Chrosniak – virtual

Aimée Hopton – virtual

****Wendy Kenyon – virtual**

Vanessa Mitchell – virtual

****Robert Otto – virtual**

Stuart Smith – virtual

Nick Underdown – virtual

Paul Vernon – virtual

Ken Whelan – virtual

Inter-Governmental Organizations

Yoshikiyo Kondo – NPAFC – virtual

Secretariat

Cathal Gallagher – Secretary

Clare Cavers – Assistant Secretary

Vicky Newton – Office Manager

CNL_IS(25)05

December Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Council

NASCO HQ, Edinburgh (hybrid meeting)

10-11 December 2025

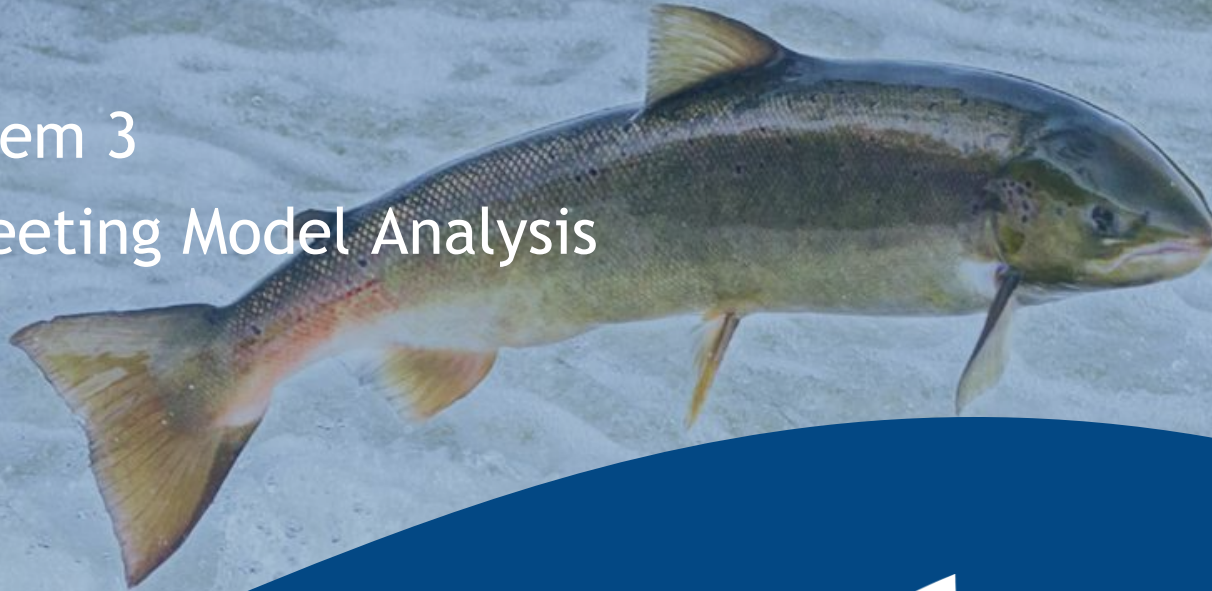
Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Annual Meeting Model
4. 2027 Forecast Budget and 2026 – 2030 Budget Plans
5. NASCO Annual Meeting Paper Numbers
6. Other Business
7. Report of the Meeting
8. Close of the Meeting

December Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Council

Agenda Item 3

NASCO Meeting Model Analysis



North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization

Meeting Frequency



Biennial or triennial?

- NASCO Convention requires an Annual meeting and approval of an annual budget
- No appetite for Convention change
- Other RMFO's 11 from 12 meet annually
- NASCO's Action Plan - has scheduled a Special Session and reviews

Recommendation 1:

NASCO retain its current annual meeting frequency to ensure alignment with the obligations required under the NASCO Convention and to facilitate the timely advancement of strategic priorities;

Meeting Date



- Audit of annual accounts (Jan to Dec) - Mid February - budget development.
- WGC - Regulatory Year, Fishery report, WGC_IS, CNL Decisions, 60-day binding measure - Fishery Starts in August
- ICES Advice schedule - current MOU 1st week in May
- Traditional NASCO meeting schedule - aligned schedules
- Other RMFO meeting dates reviewed
- ‘Shoulder’ Tourist Season

Recommendation 2:

The NASCO Annual Meeting continues to be scheduled close to the first week of June. The preferred timing for the meeting is early June, with the location determined by the willingness of a Party / jurisdiction to host. In the absence of a host, the default arrangement will be for the NASCO Secretariat to organise the meeting;

Meeting Format



- **Virtual or in person**
 - NASCO Ten-Year Strategy Core Objectives
 - Face-to-face is more effective
 - Virtual meeting duration and difficulty – time zones
- **Meeting Duration and Efficiency**
 - Current model 4.5 to 5.5 days with FAC & IASRB (1 day)
 - RMFO review - average 7 days - 1 meeting 4 days
 - Reviewed the necessity for the Friday CNL Session
 - Reviewed options to make the Friday CNL session more effective/efficient

Recommendation 3:

NASCO continues to convene face-to-face Annual Meetings scheduled for at least 4.5 days and the final review and approval of NASCO's Report of the Annual Meeting at Council only considers material changes, with the Secretariat to review editorial changes. The duration includes the FAC and Board Meetings, with the NASCO Annual Meeting Report agreed upon with increased efficiency, at the final session of the Council;

Heads of Delegations Meeting



- Enhance efficiency in the Annual Meeting timeline, adjustments to the frequency, duration, or timing of NASCO's Heads of Delegation (HoD) Meetings could be considered
- Increased discussion at the plenary sessions

12 RFMOs surveyed:

- nine hold at least one HoD meeting during their annual meetings,
- while three convene them as needed;
- over half hold one or two meetings, ranging from 30 minutes to 2 hours;
- two RFMOs hold daily meetings – one at lunchtime with lunch provided, and the other in 30-minute morning sessions before the day's business; and
- four RFMOs convene HoD meetings in advance of their annual meetings, either the day before, a month before, or six months prior

Recommendation 4:

Consideration should be given to the frequency, duration, and timing of the HoD meetings to enhance the overall efficiency of the Annual Meeting;

Meeting Host and Location



○ Local Hosted Meetings

- promotes the exchange of local knowledge and expertise;
- allows host governments to highlight their salmon conservation initiatives;
- enhances NASCO's visibility within local communities; and
- may result in lower accommodation costs compared to capital cities.

○ 12 RFMOs surveyed employ varied approaches to hosting their annual meetings

- Hotel, RMFO Building or conference

○ Baseline annual cost of meeting based on Aviemore Model (very reasonable when compared to other RFMOs)

○ Establishment of a Meeting Fund to stop peaks in NASCO budgets

- Cost of hosting meetings has increased (50% - AV and hybrid)
- 2026 draft annual budget had to be significantly revised
- Current approach to financing NASCO hosting a meeting could impact on planned activities

Recommendation 5:

NASCO maintain its current model, continuing to offer Parties and jurisdictions the opportunity to host the Annual Meeting. In the absence of a host, the Secretariat will assume responsibility for organising the event. To facilitate the latter scenario, the Secretariat further recommends establishing a dedicated meeting fund. The Fund could be structured to accumulate over time and be replenished only after the Secretariat has hosted an event. In addition, a portion of the Fund could be allocated annually to assist host Parties / jurisdictions with specific costs, such as audiovisual or hybrid meeting infrastructure, thereby reducing the financial burden and potentially encouraging broader participation in hosting;

Annual Meeting Budgeting



- Cost of hosting meetings has increased (50% - AV and hybrid)
- 2026 draft annual budget had to be significantly revised
- Aviemore Meeting Model - establishing a minimal baseline
- Comparison with other RMFO - NASCO cost-effective meetings

Recommendation 6:

To support Recommendations 1-5, NASCO adopts a baseline standard for the Annual Meeting. This standard should be minimal, designed to meet essential Annual Meeting requirements while aligning with constrained budgets. Developing and documenting a minimum standard meeting format, based on the provisions and experience of the 2026 Annual Meeting, would serve as the baseline for future Secretariat-hosted meetings and would be outlined in detail to ensure consistency and cost-efficiency;

Aviemore Estimated Meeting Costs	
Plenary Room + tea / coffee	£11,807
Two Breakout Rooms + Secretariat Office	£6,540
SSID Wi-Fi (Network Security)	£1,188
IT Support	£3,200
General AV Costs	£20,327
Hybrid Costs	£8,629
Contingency	£2,309
TOTAL	£54,000

NASCO Meeting Size



- Current numbers 100+ with an estimated 30 hybrid
- Review reduction to 50 - lower cost meeting (Venues & RMFO offices)
- NASCO Objectives and Communications and Outreach Strategy.

Recommendation 7:

No changes should be made to the current policy regarding delegate participation. The Secretariat recommends continued encouragement of full participation by Parties / jurisdictions, International Governmental Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions to enable NASCO to meet the Objectives of its Ten-Year Strategy, CNL(24)71rev, and align with its Communications and Outreach Strategy, CNL(25)54.



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