



**Finance and Administration Committee**

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

**FAC(26)03**

**Agenda Item: 4**

***Report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee***

***By Video Conference***

***8 April 2026***

**1. Opening of the Meeting**

1.1 The Chair, Rebecca Wintering (United States), opened the meeting and welcomed members of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) to its Inter-Sessional Meeting.

1.2 A list of participants is contained in Annex 1.

**2. Adoption of the Agenda**

2.1 The Committee adopted its Agenda, FACIS(26)04 (Annex 2).

2.2 Norway raised that it had some points to discuss under Agenda Item 6. Other Business.

**3. Impact of Contribution Arrears on the 2026 Budget and Decision Making**

3.1 The Chair reminded participants of the background to the meeting, i.e. that in the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Council in December 2025, [CNL\\_IS\(25\)07](#) paragraph 4.6, the Council agreed that the FAC should meet inter-sessionally ‘to review the status of contributions for 2024, 2025, and 2026, the Audit findings, and any potential impacts on the 2026 budget’, if payment of the outstanding Russian Federation’s Contributions for 2024, 2025 and 2026 had not been received.

3.2 The Chair raised that in addition to the points in paragraph 3.1 above, the Council agreed, [CNL\\_IS\(25\)07](#) paragraph 4.6, 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’.

3.3 The Chair noted that, based on the 2025 Audit, the Secretariat had been able to confirm that, with prudent and careful management, NASCO will have the funds to be able to deliver against the agreed 2026 budget, as presented in ‘Discussion on the Revision of the NASCO 2026 and Future Budgets in Light of Contribution Arrears’, [FACIS\(26\)02](#). The Secretary added that his budgetary liquidity analysis showed that while NASCO would be operating at a deficit of nearly £68,000, it would still have a cash reserve of £167,090 and, therefore, NASCO would have funds for its 2026 operations (see Annex 1 in [FACIS\(26\)02](#)). He raised the point that running deficits over time would make the budgetary situation more difficult moving forward as cash reserves would be depleted.

3.4 The Russian Federation acknowledged that its contributions to NASCO are in significant arrears. It added that it has the funds in its financial reserves and agrees to

pay its contribution arrears but has been unable to send the funds to NASCO due to new sanctions in the UK.

- 3.5 The Secretary raised that the Secretariat has been in regular contact with both the Russian Federation about the payment and the relevant UK bodies to consider the options available. He added that currently an option for the Russian Federation to pay all outstanding contributions in Euros through a non-sanctioned bank is being progressed by the Russian Federation, following Secretariat consultation with the UK Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation.
- 3.6 The FAC discussed the challenges of receiving payments in the UK from the Russian Federation and noted that solutions had been found for NEAFC, another RFMO based in the UK.
- 3.7 The Chair noted that the Secretary was working to address the issue and reminded the FAC that after two years of non-payment of contributions a Party loses its right to participate in NASCO's decision-making processes, according to Article 16, paragraph 6, of the NASCO [Convention](#).

#### **4. Consideration of revising the NASCO 2026 and Future Budgets in light of Contribution Arrears**

- 4.1 The Chair noted that the FAC had seven items for consideration on the 2026 and future NASCO budgets, as reflected in [FACIS\(26\)02](#), and that it would take each issue in turn for consideration in order to make recommendations to Council in June.
- 4.2 The Chair invited the FAC to discuss Consideration 1, [FACIS\(26\)02](#), whether NASCO continue operating in accordance with the approved 2026 Budget, while prioritising cost-reduction opportunities wherever feasible. The Chair noted extensive discussion had already been had on the 2026 Budget, including prioritising cost reduction opportunities wherever feasible. The FAC agreed to continue operating with the 2026 Budget as agreed.
- 4.3 The Chair invited the FAC to discuss Consideration 2, [FACIS\(26\)02](#), around the Contractual Obligation Fund (COF), including:
- 1) that to mitigate some risk against an immediate shortfall, potential resources of £20,000 and £25,000+ could be reallocated from NASCO's Recruitment Fund and Special Fund, respectively;
  - 2) prioritising payments into the COF from the 2027 Budget; and
  - 3) raising the ceiling of the COF, given the long-term expectation of the total potential liability to be about £280,000 by 2030.
- 4.4 The Secretariat clarified that while the current balance of the Special Fund was over £25,000, some funds were committed to outstanding work on the State of Knowledge papers and ongoing costs for the Wild Atlantic Salmon Atlas and the Fourth Reporting Cycle. The Chair therefore proposed allocating £25,000 from the Special Fund.
- 4.5 The UK suggested, from 2027 onwards, allocating £45,000 pounds annually to the COF to be able to close the gap between the liability and the funds available, by 2030.
- 4.6 The FAC agreed to make a recommendation to Council to move funds from the Recruitment Fund (£20,000) and the Special Fund (£25,000). The FAC further agreed to recommend Council consider raising the ceiling of the COF at the Annual Meeting.

- 4.7 The Chair raised that the FAC did not have a draft budget for 2027 yet but noted that the Organization's regular annual expenditure should be discussed by the FAC in advance of the Annual Meeting, where the Council will agree a budget.
- 4.8 The Chair invited the FAC to discuss Consideration 3, [FACIS\(26\)02](#), noting that the Organization's largest cost is its staff. The FAC discussed the staffing levels of the Organization and noted that the Ten-Year Strategy and planned projects needed the current level of staffing. It noted that should a staff member leave, the Organization should consider carefully as to whether that position should be filled, and that any recruitment of staff should be considered by the FAC
- 4.9 The FAC also discussed the potential to reduce discretionary staff costs, such as overtime and non-essential travel. The Chair noted that this may require an adjustment of expectations or asks at the Annual Meeting to minimize the Secretariat staff time.
- 4.10 The Secretary noted that the timing and location of meetings often meant Secretariat staff had to work outside their normal working hours, for example by travelling or working over weekends. Overtime payments are very limited and mainly associated with extra hours worked and travelled during the Annual Meeting. He also raised that the Secretariat staff do a lot of overtime, which is provided to the Organization ex gratia and without payment, and the staff also demonstrate great flexibility around their terms and conditions of work.
- 4.11 The United States raised that accruing compensatory time to be taken off at a future date could be considered. The Secretary noted that the 'custom and practice' was to be pay an overtime allowance, which is already limited, and any alternative would need further discussion and potentially legal advice.
- 4.12 The Chair invited the FAC to discuss Consideration 4, [FACIS\(26\)02](#), and the provision of multi-annual advice from ICES, including whether advice should continue to be requested annually or whether a different timeframe or approach should be pursued.
- 4.13 The FAC discussed the substantial cost of the scientific advice, noting it had not changed for the last few decades and was likely to be the same for the next 5-10 years, according to some of the Parties' scientists. It was noted that the work in ICES provided a good opportunity to collate the updated status of stocks, which each Party carried out independently. It was further noted that many species have scientific advice produced on a bi- or tri-ennial basis and NASCO could consider requesting advice from ICES every two / three / five years. The FAC also queried as to whether this work could be done in-house, i.e. within NASCO by scientists allocated by the Parties, and whether this would be in accordance with the requirements of Article 4 of the [NASCO Convention](#). It noted that the wording of Article 4, to 'establish working arrangements with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea', offered some flexibility.
- 4.14 The FAC agreed that a new approach should be explored and directed the Secretariat to consult with NASCO's Standing Scientific Committee (SSC) to understand more fully any potential issues associated with moving towards the provision of multi-annual ICES advice. This could include consideration of a hybrid option for collecting and analysing data in between advice years. The FAC also agreed, that following consultation with the SSC, to direct the Secretariat to consult with ICES to understand what is feasible with regard to a future [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU). The FAC agreed to further discuss this issue in June, on the understanding that the Secretariat would endeavour to engage with the SSC and ICES before then. Depending

on any outcome from these consultations, the FAC may consider recommending that Council agree to explore a new approach for scientific advice.

- 4.15 The Chair invited the FAC to discuss Consideration 5, [FACIS\(26\)02](#), that the FAC and Council should encourage the Parties to host Annual Meetings, noting that at its Inter-Sessional Meeting in December, [CNL\\_IS\(25\)07](#), Council created a new fund to cover costs associated with annual meetings, for which no resources had been identified at the time of the meeting, but which could be considered in NASCO's budget calculations for 2027.
- 4.16 The UK raised that hosting the NASCO Annual Meeting in 2025 was a positive experience, providing a valuable opportunity to share learning, showcase how the UK is managing salmon and raise the profile of salmon domestically.
- 4.17 The FAC discussed the creation of an annual meeting fund, noting that if annual contributions of £20,000 were made to such a fund, it would enable the Secretariat to host every three years at a cost of approximately £60,000. It was further noted that other RFMOs have adopted an annual meeting fund contributed to by Parties, with the fund available for Parties if hosting the meeting.
- 4.18 The FAC agreed that Parties should be encouraged to host the Annual Meeting. It also agreed to consider how a new Annual Meeting Fund would work, for further consideration at the FAC Annual Meeting in June.
- 4.19 The Chair invited the FAC to discuss Consideration 6, [FACIS\(26\)02](#), the concept of the introduction of a reasonable fee for in-person attendance at NASCO Annual Meetings by non-party delegates, to apply to all observers, which had been raised at the Inter-Sessional Meeting of Council in December, [CNL\\_IS\(25\)07](#), to be discussed by the FAC at its Annual Meeting. The Chair further noted that observer numbers were already limited to two attendees per organization.
- 4.20 Several FAC members noted that, in principle, the concept of a reasonable fee for in-person attendance should be considered, also noting that any fee should remain low to enable access and participation.
- 4.21 The Secretary reminded the FAC that a paper had been circulated to them which had been prepared by the NGOs and included points on their contributions to working groups and the work of NASCO etc.
- 4.22 Members of the FAC raised that while agreeing with the concept of a fee for in-person attendance, there were concerns that it would create a barrier to participation, especially in consideration of Indigenous Peoples representatives and institutions (IPRIs). With IPRIs only just invited to the NASCO table, they may be more vulnerable to such a barrier. It was raised that current NGO and IPRI engagement in NASCO is at a good level and critical to the success of Parties' Conservation Commitment Reports in NASCO's Fourth Reporting Cycle.
- 4.23 The FAC noted that the RFMO NAFO charged an in-person fee of approximately C\$100. It further noted that with the minimum meeting model this could cover an aspect such as some refreshment charges, a fee of that level would be a nominal charge.
- 4.24 The FAC also discussed the concept of charging for virtual attendance, with the hybrid aspect of the Annual Meeting accounting for quite a large amount of the meeting costs and charging for virtual attendance at meetings becoming more commonplace. It was raised that some organizations facilitate virtual participation in meetings through being able to watch the meeting without speaking access, in the form of a web broadcast.

- 4.25 The Chair raised that a fee charged for an online participation option, such as a web broadcast, could be a different amount from an in-person participation fee, as some RFMOs do. She further raised that some RFMOs determined fees on a yearly basis to reflect the size and cost of the meeting. She noted that each NASCO observer category should be consulted in considering participation fees and suggested this be done by the Chair and Secretary in advance of the FAC Annual Meeting in June.
- 4.26 The need to provide a secure Wi-Fi network for the Annual Meeting was also discussed by the FAC as a significant cost, with members questioning whether it was necessary, as such networks were not always secure and some Parties were not allowed to use them.
- 4.27 The FAC also discussed whether the number of delegates attending for each Party should be limited. It was noted that Parties are paying for the Annual Meeting through their contributions to NASCO, as well as through the hosting of Annual Meetings and associated background work.
- 4.28 The Chair invited the FAC to discuss Consideration 7, [FACIS\(26\)02](#), whether Parties / jurisdictions should be encouraged to make voluntary contributions to NASCO in view of the financial deficit identified.
- 4.29 FAC members discussed voluntary contributions. It was noted that continuing the existing mechanism of providing voluntary contributions would be supported. It was further noted that the concept of addressing contribution arrears in this way, however, would not be supported, as it would set a precedent that there are no consequences for non-payment of contributions.
- 4.30 The FAC acknowledged that voluntary contributions do not impact the existence of arrears. The FAC further agreed that voluntary contributions should be considered for any issues the Parties / jurisdictions chose.

## **5. Next Steps**

- 5.1 The Secretary raised that he would like guidance from the FAC on preparing the 2027 Budget and Forecast Budget to 2031 while taking into consideration that NASCO would be running with a deficit in 2026.
- 5.2 The FAC members noted that it had been agreed that the budget would remain at the current level plus inflation. It was further noted that, while it was helpful to produce a Forecast Budget, it was important to focus on the 2027 Budget at the FAC Annual Meeting in order to enable NASCO to operate. It was raised that budget items should be prioritised, with the suggestion that staff costs should be the main priority, followed by operating costs and then adding to the COF. It was further raised that adding to a new Annual Meeting Fund should be the next priority in turn, followed by any discretionary operating costs.
- 5.3 The FAC agreed to direct the Secretary to prepare the budget based on the 2026 budget plus inflation, noting that in 2027 Norway would be hosting the Annual Meeting and some costs would be reduced. It was further agreed that should a deficit in income remain in June, the 2027 Budget items would be evaluated at the next FAC meeting in terms of priorities.
- 5.4 The Chair noted that if there continues to be arrears at the time of the FAC's Annual Meeting, the FAC should be prepared to discuss options and consider prioritising budget items to consider what could be removed.

## **6. Other Business**

- 6.1 Norway raised that in addition to increasing the cap on the COF, the FAC should also consider increasing the cap on the Working Capital Fund to be able to cover repair costs to the building, which may be substantial. Norway further raised that consideration could be given to a cap on the lump sum paid to NASCO staff on retirement from the Organization.
- 6.2 The FAC agreed that at its Annual Meeting in June it would discuss raising the ceiling of the Working Capital Fund as well as that of the Contractual Obligations Fund. The FAC further agreed to revisit the lump sum and the amount that would be paid in the lump sum to staff should they retire from the Organization.

## **7. Report of the Meeting**

- 7.1 The FAC agreed to consider the Report of the Inter-Sessional Meeting by correspondence.

## **8. Close of the Meeting**

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

**Canada**

\*Nicole Bouchard  
Dale Marsden (Vice-Chair)

**Denmark (In respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)**

\*Augusta Jerimiassen  
Katrine Kærgaard

**European Union**

\*Ignacio Granell

**Iceland**

\*Kristján Freyr Helgason

**Norway**

\*Heidi Hansen  
Raoul Bierach

**Russian Federation**

\*Vladimir Belyaev (Acting FAC Member)  
Elena Basova  
Andrey Chesnakov

**UK**

\*Ruth Allin  
Charlotte Beardwell  
Seamus Connor

**USA**

\*Shannon Dionne  
Rebecca Wintering (Chair)  
Karen Kizer  
Elizabeth Phelps

**Secretariat**

Cathal Gallagher  
Clare Cavers

\*FAC Member

**FACIS(26)04**

***Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee  
Virtual Meeting***

***8 April 2026***

***Agenda***

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Impact of Contribution Arrears on the 2026 Budget and Decision Making
4. Consideration of revising the NASCO 2026 and Future Budgets in light of Contribution Arrears
5. Next Steps
6. Other Business
7. Report of the Meeting
8. Close of the Meeting