

## **REPORT OF THE BOARD OF THE NAMMCO FUND**

A telephone meeting of the Board of the NAMMCO Fund was held 19 January 2005 from 14:00 to 15:00 Norwegian time. On line were: Ulla S. Wang, Chair (Faroe Islands), Ole Heinrich (Greenland), Ásta Einarsdottir (Iceland), Halvard P. Johansen (Norway) and Christina Lockyer and Charlotte Winsnes from the Secretariat.

### **1 -3. Opening Procedures**

The Chair, Ulla S. Wang welcomed the Board members and the members of the Secretariat to the meeting. Charlotte Winsnes was appointed as rapporteur. The agenda as contained in NAMMCO/Fund-2005/1 was adopted. The Chair reviewed the available documents. In addition to the list of documents contained in the agenda, status reports from projects F5.01 High North Alliance, F5.02 Sjárvarborgin Seacity ehf., F6.07 Seal Craft AS and F8.04 Jan Arve Gjøvik had been distributed before the meeting.

### **4. Update on last years funded projects**

The Secretariat updated the Board on previous funded projects with reference to document NAMMCO/Fund-2005/2.

The Fund has currently four projects running. Prior to this meeting all project leaders were approached and asked to give an update on their projects.

F5.01: High North Alliance: [www.kids](http://www.kids) – an educational web site targeting children and youth. The project has been severely delayed due to various reasons explained in a letter to the Board dated 17 January. The major obstacle has been to set aside enough time at the secretariat of High North Alliance (HNA) to finalise the material and put it onto the web. The Board took note of the situation and agreed to offer an extension of three months for HNA to complete the project before taking any further steps.

F5.02 Sjárvarborgin – Seacity eh.: “Faxi the Whale” a web site providing information on whaling and life in rural communities that traditionally rely on harvesting whales in the North Atlantic. A final report had been submitted to the Board, outlining the history of the project, unforeseen problems and reasons for the lack of progress, accomplishments and finally why the project have now been finalised without having achieved the goals that it was initially set out to do.

As part of the project a web site [www.Faxi-the-whale.info](http://www.Faxi-the-whale.info) had been developed and did appear on the Internet for a short period (September 2003 – February 2004). However due to lack of interest, motivation and sufficient financial means to run the web site, it was closed down in February 2004.

The Board took note of the submitted final report and expressed its regrets that the project did not succeed. In retrospect, the general experience from all the projects involving development of web sites seemed to be that the initial optimism regarding the possibilities of the internet arising around the year 2000 did not sufficiently take into account the actual amount of time and resources needed in order to adequately implement the projects.

Project F7.01 Britt Johansen: Production of a book on the history of sealing in Nordland county in Norway. The Board was informed that the project is delayed but very much “alive”. It is however difficult to predict when it will be finalised. Ms Johansen did not

manage to secure enough funding to enable her to take time off from her work and consequently she is writing the book in her spare time, which makes progress slower than originally anticipated in her application.

F7.03 Arne Kalland: Book on Marine Mammals in Northern Cultures. The publication has been delayed but is expected in 2005.

Since the last meeting the following projects have been finalised:

Project F6.02 Grindamannafelagið: Film on pilot whaling. NAMMCO gave support for production of subtitles.

Project F6.07 Seal Craft AS: A book prospectus with focus on utilisation of seals in Greenland, Iceland and Norway.

Project Project F6.09 Skólavefurinn ehf. The Atlantic Ocean – lifeline of the North. Teaching material for children on marine mammals in the North Atlantic, accessible both on the web and in textbook form.

Project F7.02 Friðleifsson and Bjarnason: An interactive computer programme with information on marine mammals aimed at primary and secondary schools, museums, tourists *etc.*

Project F8.04 Jan Arve Gjøvik: A report on the ethical argumentation in support of marine mammal hunting.

Apart from the decisions made in reference to projects F5.01 and F5.02 above the Board took note of the project updates.

## **5. Future of the NAMMCO Fund**

The Secretariat presented the background document NAMMCO/Fund-2005/3. The document gave an overview of the history of the NAMMCO Fund and outlined some alternative approaches based on previous discussions regarding the Fund.

Following a growing concern that the NAMMCO Fund did not produce the intended outcome, the question of the future of the Fund was raised at the Council meeting in 2003 and later reiterated at the Council meeting in 2004. In 2004 the Fund was put on hold and the Board of the NAMMCO Fund was tasked with developing alternative approaches to the Fund and providing recommendations as to the restructuring of the Fund, to be presented to the Council at its meeting in 2005.

The following alternatives were discussed:

### Status Quo

Since the adoption of the Fund Policy and Application Procedure and the “first” allocation of support adhering to this procedure in 2000, 13 projects have been granted support of which three have later been withdrawn. As of January 2005, four projects were still not finalised, of which one never will be.

There has been a general feeling that a relatively large amount of time and effort both by the Secretariat and others is not giving the anticipated results. The main reasons for this are:

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- a majority of the projects have not been completed within the anticipated time frame. As a result of the delays a lot of time has been spent on following up the projects,
- to ensure that the information in a given project is scientifically adequate, members of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee have been used as consultants. This has proven to be very time consuming for the persons involved, and therefore not a feasible solution in the future.

Other, perhaps more important concerns were:

- the number of applicants have been decreasing in recent years making the pool of proposals to choose from small. To a certain degree this may be the result of inadequate exposure of the existence of the Fund,
- the quality of incoming proposals varies a lot. The Fund criteria have no reference to quality qualifications, and as the projects by nature are not scientific it is more difficult to find clear-cut criteria to judge them by.

### Yearly newsletter

The objective would be to produce a newsletter giving highlights from ongoing work in NAMMCO aimed at the general public. This option requires that people in the NAMMCO network provide input in the form of written articles *etc.* Although different in nature, experiences from the NAMMCO Scientific Publication Series do not favour this proposal. It has proven very difficult to get people to contribute with written text. To do this in a non-scientific or technical manner will probably represent an additional workload.

### The NAMMCO Prize

The objective would be to establish a prize/stipend in the area of NOK 50 000 to be awarded to one person or project of outstanding qualities. Such a prize would require a formal procedure on how to nominate candidates and a set of formal criteria by which a candidate is chosen. It would furthermore be necessary to have a Committee tasked with to finding and appointing the successful candidate.

A clear advantage with such a grant is the opportunity for exposure in the media. A disadvantage is obviously that the process requires a substantial amount of work both by the Secretariat and the Committee responsible for identifying a successful candidate.

### Travel support to conferences/meetings

The objective would be to establish a travel grant for students to attend international meetings with a relevance to NAMMCO issues. After having established criteria and guidelines approved by the Council, the Secretariat could handle the process and report back to the Board, or the Secretariat could be responsible for nominating candidates to the Board for its approval.

An advantage would be that NAMMCO would gain some publicity and coverage at the meetings and also a certain exposure at universities and research institutions. It would further motivate the students applying to do some study on NAMMCO. A clear disadvantage is that the target group would not be the general public.

Furthermore, the Board was of the opinion that the number of applicants could easily be relatively large, making the administration of the travel grant very time consuming.

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### To dissolve the NAMMCO Fund

The Statutes of the NAMMCO Fund state that “if the NAMMCO Fund should be dissolved, the Council shall decide on the use to be made of any balance remaining, in accordance with the aim of the Fund”. The remaining assets (funds not allocated) in the Fund are NOK 100,000.

One obvious result of dissolving the Fund is of course that the money previously allocated to the Fund each year (the annual allocation to the NAMMCO Fund has been NOK 200,000, with the exception of the year 2004) may be released for other purposes.

Also, the time and effort spent on administering the Fund may be used on other tasks in the Secretariat, and of course likewise for the members of the Board

### Discussion and recommendation

After having discussed each of the above alternatives, the Board agreed that they would recommend that the NAMMCO Fund be dissolved. It was the general feeling that the Fund had accomplished a lot during the time of its existence. The Fund portfolio represents a variety of successful projects such as seminars, books, documentary films, brochures, posters, proceedings from conferences, exhibitions, projects/studies and development of web sites. However, the Board was of the opinion that the financial and human resources put into the Fund would be better spent on other priority tasks set by the Council. They furthermore recommended that the remaining assets be transferred to the budget item general information.

### **6. Any other business**

There were no issues raised under this agenda item.

### **7. Approval of the report**

The report was approved through correspondence on 28 January 2005.