



# NAMMCO COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH STRATEGY

*Adopted by Council at NAMMCO 25-April 2017*

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## Background

NAMMCO is a unique and active forum whose activities and success in management deserve to be disseminated. Dealing with iconic species and potentially controversial topics affecting the life and survival of coastal communities, NAMMCO bears a strong outreach and communication potential.

NAMMCO deserves to make itself more well known outside of its community (Council, subsidiary bodies and observers). That is why the organisation has designed a communication and outreach strategy so that it can expand its interaction with media, with other organisations and with the inhabitants of its four member countries and establish itself as a credible source of information. NAMMCO holds a significant amount of information and it has a crucial – and effective – role in the conservation of North Atlantic and Arctic marine mammals.

What NAMMCO is, does and succeeds in achieving will be more actively and widely communicated. NAMMCO's small size and the larger size and prominence of its peers requires NAMMCO to conduct a proactive and focused communication effort in order to stand out.

A communication and outreach strategy will support and help prioritize communication and outreach activities in NAMMCO. It represents a necessary base for the development of productive, fruitful and focused communication activities.

Effective communication will underpin the transparency of NAMMCO, in particular of the process leading to its management advice, which is essential for an organisation dealing with controversial issues.

## Function of the Communication and Outreach Strategy (COS)

The COS provides an overarching framework for NAMMCO's communication and outreach work. It also provides the basis for and underpins the communication activities of individual NAMMCO actors (Parties, Chairs, Committees and Working Groups).

The COS addresses long-term communication objectives, overarching messages, various target groups and different types of communication channels. It focuses on both external and internal communication. It helps to further the visibility of the organisation's activities and it supports its transparency.

Making the work of NAMMCO more widely known among priority target groups and strengthening NAMMCO as an international actor is a long-term project. The communication strategy should be seen as a 10-year initiative, with a first leg of its implementation in the form of a communication plan (CP) addressing a shorter period of 2 years.

## Governing principles

To be efficient, NAMMCO Communication needs to be developed for both the long and short terms, and also needs to be proactive, responsive and cooperative, factual and not emotional.

- Proactive communication is a prerequisite for NAMMCO because of the small size and specialised scope of the organisation.
- NAMMCO deals with a controversial field, and attention shall be given to conducting responsive and cooperative activities rather than reactive and confrontational ones.
- NAMMCO communication must be factual. Fact based, responsive and cooperative communication is much more productive and has much more potential as a breeding ground for exchange and understanding.

The communication strategy shall consider NAMMCO's two main handicaps in terms of visibility, outreach and communication:

- It is a very small and specialised organisation with a small community
- It has a very small and non-communication specialised secretariat.

### *Vision:*

NAMMCO is perceived as the pre-eminent and most effective forum for the conservation and management of marine mammals in the North Atlantic.

### *Mission:*

To provide factual, timely and clear information on marine mammals and related issues

### *Goals:*

NAMMCO communication and outreach shall

- Develop a higher level of visibility, especially in NAMMCO countries
- Support transparency
- Convey that NAMMCO has the following characteristics, that it is:
  - appropriate and credible;
  - active (in science, conservation and welfare);
  - relevant in current debates (e.g. Arctic Issues, Climate Change, Food Security, Animal Welfare and Blue Growth);
  - a credible source of information;
  - founded upon a transparent management advice-generating process;
  - based on best practices, science and local knowledge;
  - the only international management forum for pinnipeds;
  - a good partner for dialogue and cooperation.

## Key messages

- NAMMCO is the credible and relevant international forum for issues concerning Marine Mammals in the Arctic and Northern Atlantic Ocean;
- NAMMCO supports the preservation of biodiversity, by ensuring the sustainable use of marine mammal resources;
- NAMMCO strives to convey the many-sided aspects of species and stock management and consequently the multifaceted nature of conservation issues;
- NAMMCO ensures that issues associated with the Arctic region and the environment of marine mammals are highlighted and given priority;
- NAMMCO supports food security and resilient communities by underpinning sustainable use of marine resources and addressing the effect of climate change on a marine food resource.

## Internal target audience

NAMMCO community and actors, Council, Committees and Working and Expert Groups, and the Secretariat are internal target groups as well as the NAMMCO observer organisations.

## External target audience

Eight primary external target groups have been identified for NAMMCO's external communication and outreach work:

- Users of marine mammals in the Nordic and Arctic regions
- Policy Makers / Managers
- Journalists/Media working on Arctic and Environmental issues
- Wider public in Member Countries
- Marine mammal conservation- and Arctic-focused NGOs, INGOs, IPOs
- Marine mammal- and Arctic-focused Scientific and Research Community
- Nordic politicians
- Youth, children and educators, member countries' educational networks

## Internal channels

NAMMCO has various media that will be developed to satisfy the needs of its target audiences but first and foremost:

- The website which is the most important information site and transparency channel of the organisation. It shall function as the hub and umbrella for all communication activities as well as contain the NAMMCO archives. The website must be broadly appealing with good search capabilities and easy mobile access. It contains blogs written by the Secretariat or eminent members of the NAMMCO community with posts on Social Media (SoMe) to attract traffic to the website plus background to posts on SoMe in general. The website is constantly updated with relevant information on the factual status of marine mammal stocks in the North Atlantic, it informs about the importance of marine mammals in the life of the Nordic and Arctic communities and about NAMMCO procedures and achievements.

- Social Media, primarily Facebook, in order to draw audiences to the website for more information but also to establish NAMMCO as a relevant, open-minded and dialogue oriented organisation, promoting information that supports the conservation of marine mammals.
- Internal communications for the board and other NAMMCO actors, be it in the form of bi-annual newsletters, direct mails or national progress reports.

### External channels

NAMMCO develops its media relations and establishes ongoing contact with journalists, beginning with member and Nordic countries. Relevant media and journalists are identified for each specific communication plan.

The prioritized media outlets should be first and foremost the media of the Nordic/Arctic regions and specifically of the relevant member countries. NAMMCO should strive to develop relations with relevant, centrally placed journalists and their media, specifically in the electronic media, and with their Social Media channels.

The journalist categories that should be included in media work are:

- foreign correspondents, political journalists, science journalists, editorial writers and writers specialising in subjects that are relevant to the Arctic region (environment, tourism, biology, climate change etc.), and organisers of “courses” for journalists on Arctic issues.

NAMMCO representatives are present at relevant external meetings. They endeavour to be active communicators, using NAMMCO’s existing resources to increase knowledge of the organisation.

Relevant meeting places should be identified and prioritised in order to support long-term communication goals.

### Roles and responsibilities

All NAMMCO actors are responsible for implementing the communication strategy and for helping in achieving specific objectives. Supporting and contributing to the circulation of information is essential.

NAMMCO Secretariat plays a key role in implementing and coordinating the communication strategy, under the supervision of the Chair and the FAC. An important part of this work is to plan, implement and coordinate external communication measures. The role of the Secretariat is also to develop and sustain effective routines in internal communication. The work of the Secretariat ensures long-term continuity and short-term efficiency.

In consultation with FAC and the Secretariat, the member countries and Council Members strive to develop communication vis-à-vis the target groups in each country and region. They shall assist the Secretariat with information exchange to and from NAMMCO with regards to their countries and regions, continuously providing information and making sure NAMMCO is supplied with up-to-date information on their activities.

### Resources

Resources are essential to realise the ambitions of the communication strategy, both in terms of budget and manpower. The level of resources committed will have a direct effect on the communication strategy's chances of making a forceful impact.

It is important that adequate resources be channelled to the Secretariat. This is especially needed in the implementation phase until a certain routine is achieved.

### Priorities and Actions

An essential element for successfully implementing the COS is switching the mindset of all NAMMCO actors, in particular of the Secretariat and the Council, to communication mode so that they envisage their input to NAMMCO also in terms of communication.

Priorities are:

- Allocating stable resources to communication
- Boosting the website activity by implementing a blogging practice and regular updates
- Channelling visitors from social media to the website (using FB posts as trailers to larger articles on the website)
- Defining and implementing a shorter-term communication plan, the first one for 2017-2018

### Evaluation

Communication campaigns benefit from evaluation and subsequent adjustment.

In the first year of implementation of the COS and opening of the new website, activity on the website and FB will be closely monitored by measuring the number of visitors on the website and the number of followers on social media.

The resulting impact of NAMMCO activity on the social media (flow of persons engaged, responses, etc.) should also be monitored, to adjust the effort and adapt the information released to give priority to those generating more activity.

A major review will be carried out in April 2018, after the jubilee year and the communication plan will be adjusted, taking into account the experience gained. A SWOT on communication activities will be performed at the end of the 2-year communication plan.