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DOCUMENT 15	REPORT OF THE <i>AD HOC</i> WORKING GROUP ON PERFORMANCE REVIEW
Submitted by	<i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on the Performance Review
Action requested	Take note of the report Consider the recommendations of the PRWG
Background	<p>At its 25th meeting (April 2017), the Council agreed to undertake a Performance Review of the Organisation. The Panel carried out the review in 2018-2019 and the Chair of the Panel presented the review and its conclusions to the 27th meeting of the Council (April 2019).</p> <p>In response, the Council 27 “agreed to establish an ad hoc Working Group (PRWG) led by the Chair of the Council to review the recommendations introduced in the Performance Review Report.”</p> <p>The <i>ad hoc</i> Working Group on Performance Review (PRWG) met twice, on 12-13 June 2019 (Copenhagen) and 20 November 2019 (Nuuk) and concluded its report by correspondence on 08.03.21</p> <p>This report presents a summary of discussions, summaries of input from NAMMCO Committees, and the PRWG recommendations to Council.</p> <p>Appendix 1 provides the request of the PRWG to the Committees and their response process.</p> <p>Appendices 2 to 7 provide the responses of the Committees on Inspection and Observation (A2) and Hunting Methods (A3), the Working Group on By-catch, Entanglement and Live Strandings (A4), the Scientific Committee (A5), the Finance and Administration Committee (A6) and the Management Committees (A7).</p> <p>Appendix 8 provides the list of recommendations from the Performance Review Panel, the comments of the PRWG and its assignment to relevant NAMMCO bodies for further consideration.</p>

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1. INTRODUCTION

At its 25th Annual Meeting, the Council agreed to undertake a Performance Review of the organisation, which should give special emphasis to the objective of the Commission reflected in the NAMMCO Agreement, to “contribute through regional consultation and cooperation to the conservation, rational management and study of marine mammals in the North Atlantic”. It adopted the process whereby the review would be carried out, specifying the objectives of the review, terms of reference, selection of the Review Panel, assessment criteria, procedure and administration.

The terms of reference (ToR) of the Performance Review were:

- To assess the performance of NAMMCO since July 1992 (the date when the Agreement came into force) against the objectives set out in the Agreement and any other relevant international instruments addressing the conservation and management of marine mammals or living marine resources relevant to marine mammals.
- To assess the performance of the Parties of NAMMCO in following the recommendations and proposals of NAMMCO in terms of conservation and management, hunting methods and inspection and observation.
- Consideration should be given to developments in ocean management, monitoring techniques and technical development that have taken place during the period covered by the review.
- The review should be performed based on the criteria specified in the attached list and should point to achievements as well as areas which could be improved.

The Panel started its work in January 2018 and delivered its report on 1 March 2019. The Chair of the Panel presented the review and its conclusions to the 27th meeting of the Council in April 2019.

In response, the Council “agreed to establish an ad hoc Working Group (PRWG) led by the Chair of the Council to review the recommendations introduced in the Performance Review Report. The PRWG would then seek the views of NAMMCO Committees and working groups on the recommendations specific to their areas of work. Taking into account their input, the PRWG would discuss the cross-cutting and overarching aspects of the Performance Review’s conclusions and recommendations, with a view to proposing to the Council any relevant follow up actions”.

The member countries subsequently agreed by correspondence to the process proposed by the Chair of the Council for addressing this task. The *ad hoc* Working Group on Performance Review (PRWG) met twice, on 12-13 June (Copenhagen) and 20 November 2019 (Nuuk). The first meeting was held early in June, so the Scientific Committee (SC) and the Committees on Hunting Methods (CHM), Inspection and Observation (CIO) and Finance and Administration (FAC), as well as the Working Group on By-catch, Entanglement and Live Strandings (BYCELS) could be forwarded any relevant recommendations for consideration ahead of their autumn meetings, and responses from the Committees could be received by the PRWG ahead of to its second meeting in November. The Management Committees were also forwarded the relevant recommendations, they should initially consider the requests of the PRWG at their meeting in March 2020. As this meeting was postponed to March 2021, they considered the request at a dedicated meeting on 18 February 2021. Work of the PRWG

1.1 FIRST MEETING OF THE PRWG

The first meeting was held in Copenhagen on 12-13 June 2019. It was chaired by the Chair of the Council, Sanderson (Faroe Islands) and attended by Nolsøe (Faroe Islands), Jessen and Levermann (Greenland; NL remote participation), Einarsdóttir (Iceland), Stenseth (Norway) and Geneviève Desportes (Secretariat).

The Chair underlined that a performance review should be seen as a positive and useful process giving organisations the opportunity to take stock and to identify areas where performance could be improved. International discussions since 2005, through FAO as well as in the UNGA, had generated

procedures and processes for performance reviews in regional fisheries management bodies, with which NAMMCO member countries were also familiar, such as in NEAFC and NAFO.

In addition to referring to the general terms of reference for the ad hoc Working Group as decided by the Council (see Introduction above), the Working Group began its discussion by underlining the purpose of its meeting in general.

Participants agreed to underline that a Performance Review should be seen as a natural part of the organisation's activities, and that it will be up to the member countries to focus on those aspects of the review that can contribute to the improvement and strengthening of NAMMCO's work.

This meant that not all issues identified by the Panel would be new, nor would all issues necessarily require further action. As such, it was important to stress that this was a review, not a reform process, and that NAMMCO's founding principles and objectives as a regional resource conservation and management organisation are not in question.

Two issues raised at NAMMCO/27 had also been referred to the Performance Review process and needed to be addressed:

- Secretariat capacity, workload and priorities: a more focused intersessional discussion should be undertaken among member countries and the Secretariat on the priorities of the Commission and the ability and capacity of the Secretariat to fulfil the tasks assigned.
- Communication strategy and the need for further review and discussion: the NAMMCO Communication Strategy should be reviewed in relation to the follow-up of the Performance Review recommendations.

Several of the issues taken up by the Panel were currently under discussion within the Council and Committees. The task of the PRWG was to identify the recommendations that they considered relevant and beneficial to NAMMCO and that could help strengthen the organisation.

1.1.1 Review of specific recommendations

The PRWG proceeded systematically through the recommendations (see Appendix 2) grouped according to 1) overarching recommendations, 2) recommendations related to seven work areas, 3) recommendations to Parties, 4) recommendations related to an eventual next performance review. Recommendations were also grouped thematically within the work areas (e.g., relating to data standards and submission and the development of a NAMMCO database).

The PRWG consideration of specific recommendations were reflected in the annotations added to the list of recommendations, under the columns "PRWG comments" (Appendix 2). Where a recommendation to NAMMCO is "noted", no further follow-up action by NAMMCO was proposed by the PRWG. Some recommendations were considered by the PRWG as not relevant and therefore not applicable "N/A". The PRWG agreed to forward to the Committees the recommendations from the Performance Review relevant to their work, as indicated in Appendix 2 in column "Referred to".

The PRWG agreed that in forwarding recommendations to specific committees for further consideration, the Committees would also be asked to identify any other related matters for which they may have suggestions for improvements to their work and working procedures.

The PRWG reviewed recommendations to member countries in order to consider whether they were also within the remit of the Committees, in which case they were also forwarded to them, while noting that the member countries concerned are responsible for addressing them. Recommendations directed to individual member countries were "noted" by the Working Group, based on the assumption that the country in question would further consider these and report back to NAMMCO, where relevant.

1.2 INPUT FROM THE NAMMCO COMMITTEES

The request of the PRWG for input from the Committees and the relevant recommendations were forwarded to all the NAMMCO Committees and the BYCELS Working Group by the Secretariat in August 2019, ahead of the autumn meetings.

In its request, the PRWG underlined to the Committees that the overall conclusions of the Performance Review were positive, and that NAMMCO was a well-functioning organisation, thanks also to their input and work. The Committees were advised to see the Performance Review as an opportunity to reassess their own working processes and recommend any changes which could improve their work and the workflow and communication between subsidiary bodies.

In reviewing the recommendations, the Committees were requested to

- a) Consider the relevance of the recommendations,
- b) Identify any other related matters for which they may have suggestions for improvements to their work and working procedures,
- c) Propose ways for implementing the recommendations and improving processes, where relevant.

The considerations and recommendations of the Committees should be clearly and thoroughly substantiated.

The Committees were also asked to consider the forwarded recommendations in the light of the five general priorities identified by the PRWG (see item 4 below).

- 1) **High data quality and reliability** – as needed for high quality science, which is at the core of NAMMCO management, and referring both to data collection and reporting/sharing and the recurrent aim of reducing data gaps for ensuring sustainable and precautionary management based on the best scientific evidence,
- 2) **Follow up on the advice provided by the Committees** – with the need for a clear, standardised and well described follow up process,
- 3) **Transparency** – referring to all processes and working procedures of the organisation and, particularly, the advice formulation process and the response from the member countries,
- 4) **Precautionary approach** – in the process of decision making and thereby also the management advice-generating process,
- 5) **Communication** – i.e. providing reliable information and raising awareness about the work of NAMMCO [with the website as the preeminent tool of communication and outreach of NAMMCO. The information contained should be complete, clear, updated, and accurate].

The processes followed by the FAC, CHM, CIO, BYCELS, SC and MCs to review the recommendations and formulate their answers as well as their detailed responses can be found in Appendix 1.

1.3 SECOND MEETING OF THE PRWG

The second meeting of the PRWG was held in Nuuk on 20 November 2019. It was chaired by the Chair of the Council, Sanderson (Faroe Islands) and attended by Nolsøe (Faroe Islands), Jessen and Levermann (Greenland), Einarisdóttir (Iceland), Stenseth and Steinar Lindberg (Norway) and Geneviève Desportes and Charlotte Winsnes (Secretariat).

The main task of the PRWG at its second meeting was to review the responses of the Committees to its requests. Considering that these represented the views of the Committees, the PRWG agreed to forward them without further comment to the Council. The role of the PRWG had been to identify which PR recommendations should be addressed and on what terms.

Several of the Committees were already addressing some of the recommendations of the Review Panel that they found relevant, either as a response to the recommendations of the Performance Review or because the Committees had arrived at the same conclusion independently of the Performance Review Panel and had identified issues and/or needs for improvement.

The importance of the website as a hub for reliable information was acknowledged by all Committees and all had proposed a process whereby the existing information could be quality controlled, including how new information would be quality-checked.

The need for reliable data from member countries and for a standardised manner of reporting all data requests from all NAMMCO subsidiary bodies had already been developed by the CHM, CIO and BYCELS, and a proposal for a single NAMMCO database was forwarded and endorsed by Council 27.

CHM, CIO and BYCELS also strongly emphasised the importance of the safe storage of the data on a suitable platform to ensure standardisation, continuity and accessibility.

The SC, faced with a considerably larger number of recommendations, prioritised them and proposed ways for implementing the ones it considered relevant.

2. REVIEW OF PANEL'S GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The PRWG noted that the general conclusions of the Panel were positive. According to the Panel, the Commission was meeting its overall objective to "contribute through regional consultation and cooperation to the conservation, rational management and study of marine mammals in the North Atlantic", as well as the variety of goals identified in the Preamble to the Agreement that could be seen as related to the overall objective of the Agreement.

The PRWG noted the conclusions of the Panel that NAMMCO had attained a level of credibility among other organizations involved with Arctic issues and marine mammal conservation. The outputs from the Scientific Committee and the Committee on Hunting Methods were substantive and substantial. With respect to these and to recommended conservation measures pertaining to the sustainable management of marine mammals across the North Atlantic, NAMMCO's work was valued, relied upon and sought. NAMMCO had become a preeminent and credible forum for the discussion on conservation and management of marine mammals in the North Atlantic region.

According to the Panel, NAMMCO members shared a commitment to ensuring the sustainable management of marine mammals in the North Atlantic. They had, for the most part, implemented the recommendations and the conservation and management measures proposed by the Commission in a timely fashion.

The PRWG noted the Panel's conclusion that while NAMMCO had performed well, there was room for improvement. The Panel had made a total of 95 specific recommendations and suggestions on how the Commission could improve various aspects of its performance.

The PRWG agreed to address the over-arching recommendations from the Panel in the context of a general discussion of NAMMCO priorities (Item 4). Recommendations seen as "overarching recommendations" included the following:

- Some declining or unknown marine mammal populations faced substantial takes. NAMMCO should provide its Members with advice that would allow them to manage all harvested stocks using a precautionary approach.
- There was a lack of transparent procedures and working methods in relation to assessments, implementation of management actions and interactions between NAMMCO's bodies.
- The Panel also noted that the Observation Scheme possibly did not provide benefits commensurate with its costs.
- The Panel recommended that NAMMCO develop and implement a Strategic Plan to help focus its efforts and better guide decision-making across the organisation.

3. DISCUSSION OF NAMMCO PRIORITIES

The PRWG returned to the overarching recommendations (see item 3 and Appendix 1) as a basis for a discussion on priorities. The Chair noted that the identification of priorities in relation to the workload and capacity of the Secretariat was also an issue the Council had tasked the PRWG to consider, as was a discussion of the Communication Strategy.

The PRWG noted the emphasis given by the Panel to the recommendation for NAMMCO to develop a Strategic Plan as a tool for identifying and implementing priorities. The PRWG concluded, however, that such a formal bureaucratic tool was not necessary in the NAMMCO context. It was noted that the flexible way in which member countries work together, including in the Heads of Delegation format, provides a good basis for regular and frank discussions. The PRWG noted that the “culture” of NAMMCO as a small and like-minded organisation with a high degree of trust among its members was an important aspect of NAMMCO’s work, but an aspect that the Performance Review Panel had failed to highlight adequately.

Based on a more general discussion of NAMMCO policies and principles, noting the over-arching recommendations from the Performance Review Panel, the PRWG identified five issues which could benefit from greater attention as priority matters for NAMMCO, with the aim of further strengthening and improving the work of the organisation, both in the shorter and longer terms.

In identifying the priority areas outlined below, the fundamental importance of scientific cooperation as the basis of NAMMCO’s work was underlined. It was also noted that any substantial increase in membership contributions was not an option in the short term.

Priority issues:

- 1) **Data quality and reliability to ensure high quality science, which is at the core of NAMMCO management** – This refers both to data collection and reporting/sharing, also in order to reduce data gaps to ensure management advice based on the best available scientific evidence. The PRWG noted that the Panel had made several recommendations concerning data submission, data collation and data standardisation, also regarding the development of an up-to-date database in the Secretariat. These recommendations were grouped together and referred to the relevant Committees for their consideration and technical feedback. (see Appendix 2)
- 2) **Follow up on the scientific, conservation and management advice provided by the Committees** – The PRWG identified the need to ensure a clear, standardised and well-defined follow-up process with respect to advice provided by all Committees, both in relation to scientific research, conservation and management measures, and hunting methods.

As underlined in recommendations from the PR Panel, the Working Group noted that a better communication between the different bodies should be ensured, with clearer explanations of requests for advice and the recommendations and decisions, as well as a clear indication of the reasons for NAMMCO and/or its member countries for supporting or not supporting the advice requested from Committees.

- 3) **Transparency** – It should continue to be given high priority in all processes and working procedures of the organisation, particularly in the formulation of advice and responses from the member countries.

The quality and completeness of the information available on the NAMMCO website is at the core of NAMMCO’s credibility as an international organisation. Transparency is also supported by the quality and availability of the data and data sharing as well as the quality of meeting reports, which must clearly describe the basis for and processes behind advice given and decisions made.

- 4) **Precautionary approach** – the PRWG identified the need to give greater priority to considering how the precautionary approach can and should be applied in the context of scientific, conservation and management advice generated through NAMMCO, not least in relation to poorly or not managed stocks subject to substantial removals.
- 5) **Communication** – Providing reliable information and raising awareness about the work of NAMMCO was also identified by the PRWG as a priority area, and one that required more active and regular review and clearer guidance for the Secretariat.

In identifying Communication as a priority area, the PRWG used the opportunity to discuss in more detail the Communication Strategy, as had been requested by the Council.

The Chair referred to the Vision and Mission of the Communication Strategy (adopted in 2017), in which the vision is for NAMMCO to be seen as the pre-eminent and most effective forum for the conservation and management of marine mammals in the North Atlantic, with its mission being to provide factual, timely and clear information on marine mammals and related issues.

The PRWG discussed the linkages between communication and transparency, credibility, and legitimacy, and how these relate to the level of visibility that is required or desired. It was noted that there is a need to ensure better consistency between the ambitions for communication and outreach and available resources, and that perhaps the Secretariat has been over-stretched in this regard and the Strategy has been too ambitious.

The PRWG agreed that the NAMMCO website should be the focus of communication efforts, ensuring high quality, updated and comprehensive information on marine mammal research, conservation and management on marine mammal stocks and species in the North Atlantic carried out through NAMMCO. Awareness of and access to the website should be enhanced through Search Engine Optimization, with the aim of having links to NAMMCO appearing high on the list of any internet searches about marine mammals. Making NAMMCO more visible on Wikipedia was also important.

The PRWG noted that although other communication platforms such as Facebook and Twitter did not address the same public as the website, they should not necessarily have high priority. Communications in social media should be primarily focussed on NAMMCO's own work, and resources to maintain them should not compromise the completion and update of the website. Outreach, as distinct from maintaining existing external relations, could be reduced to save effort and costs, i.e. participating in events organised by organisations with which NAMMCO has not established formal relations.

The PRWG suggested that the General Secretary should prepare an overview of the time used for communication and outreach, assessing what would be gained by scaling back on outreach efforts in favour of focussing efforts on the website. This overview should then be considered more closely by the Finance and Administration Committee, which could develop more detailed guidance for the Secretariat on communication priorities. It was also noted that in setting clear priorities for communication in relation to available resources, Member Countries need to be adequately prepared with clear views on the Secretariat's proposals for communication and outreach activities.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To carry out a Performance Review was viewed as a natural part of the organisation's activities. This was a review, not a reform process, and NAMMCO's founding principles and objectives as a regional resource conservation and management organisation were not in question.

The PRWG highlighted the following conclusions of the Performance Review Panel: "The Panel was of the view that the outputs from the NAMMCO were substantial and substantive and have made it a credible forum for the discussion of the conservation and management of marine mammals in the Arctic and North Atlantic regions. These include the National Progress Reports, organization of conferences/symposia, workshops and Expert Working Groups, cooperation with other relevant

organizations and the work of the Scientific Committee, Management Committees, Committee on Hunting Methods and Committee on Inspection and Observation” [PR18-RC90]

Although the Review Panel concluded that NAMMCO had performed well since its inception in 1992, the PRWG also noted that the Panel had considered that there was still room for improvement. The Panel had given a total of 95 specific recommendations and suggestions on how the Commission could improve various aspects of its performance. The task of the PRWG was to identify the recommendations that they considered relevant and beneficial to NAMMCO and that could help strengthen the work of the organisation.

Some issues did not require further action and were simply noted by the PRWG. Not all issues identified by the Panel were new and some had already been identified by the Committees themselves and were under consideration within the Council and/or Committees.

The Panel emphasized through several recommendations the need for NAMMCO to develop a Strategic Plan as a tool for identifying and implementing priorities. The PRWG concluded, however, that such a formal bureaucratic tool was not necessary in the NAMMCO context.

In response to recommendations from the Panel, the PRWG identified five issues as priority matters for NAMMCO and that could benefit from greater attention, with the aim of further strengthening and improving the work of the organisation, both in the shorter and longer terms. These priority items are:

- 1) **Data quality and reliability;**
- 2) **Follow up on the scientific, conservation and management advice provided by the Committees;**
- 3) **Transparency in work processes;**
- 4) **Precautionary approach in management;**
- 5) **Communication efforts.**

The PRWG recommended that the Council endorse these priorities as a basis to sustain and guide the work of NAMMCO in general and of its subsidiary bodies in particular in the coming years. Table 1 lists the points of action prioritised by the PRWG in relation to the five priority areas.

The PRWG recommended that strong attention be given to ensuring the quality, reliability, safe storage and accessibility of data.

The NAMMCO website should continue to be the focus of communication efforts. It was crucial to ensure that the information on marine mammals related to research, conservation and management of stocks and species in the North Atlantic was of a high quality, updated and comprehensive. The PRWG recommended that this should continue to be a core task of the Secretariat and given priority over other communication efforts until the website was completed and updated.

The PRWG also recommended that the Council apply the sequence of NAMMCO meetings proposed by the FAC, with a Scientific Committee meeting prior to the Council meeting in the first half of the year, both allowing the Scientific Committee more time to respond to Council’s requests, as well as providing the most up-to-date advice.

The PRWG recommended that the discussion on the capacity, workload and priorities of the Secretariat continue as a more focused intersessional discussion among member countries and the Secretariat. A balance needed to be established between the priorities defined for the Commission and the ability and capacity of the Secretariat to fulfil the tasks assigned.

The PRWG recommended that the Council endorse the conclusions of the Committees and BYCELS Working Group regarding their further work for addressing the recommendations of the Performance Review Panel. Based on the response to the PR from the Joint Management Committee (see Appendix 7), the PRWG recommended that NAMMCO more clearly define how the precautionary approach is applied in its approaches to conservation and management, in particular in processes for rebuilding depleted stocks. The Joint Management Committee should further discuss and define how this work should proceed, also with the involvement of the Scientific Committee.

4.1 TABLE 1: LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Priorities defined by the PRWG	Related Review Panel's recommendations	Recommended actions proposed by the PRWG	Responsible	Supporting ongoing activities
Data quality and reliability	RC12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, 52, 87	Strong attention be given to data quality, reliability, safe storage and accessibility	Committees / Members	Cs/Members implementing the use of a single standardised reporting format
			Members	Reporting of validated data, better reporting of struck and lost
			Secretariat	Searchable NAMMCO catch database
		Complete overview documents on endorsed abundance estimates, removal levels, assessment status	Secretariat, Committees	Overview documents being prepared by Secretariat
Follow up on the scientific, conservation and management recommendations provided by the committees	RC5	Continue develop overview documents following up the responses to proposal from committees for advice on stock status and hunting activities	Secretariat / Committees / Members	Secretariat's implementation since NAMMCO 26 of a standardised follow up process for all committees
	RC79	A new sequence of annual meetings, following SC recommendation, with the SC annual meeting held 2 months prior to the Commission Annual Meeting.	FAC / SC	Implemented in 2021
Transparency in work processes	RC4, 5, 28, 29, 60, 61, 62 76	Basis for specific advice better articulated by the SC and the MCs, in particular where MCs decisions differ from the advice provided by the SC.	MCs & SC	Review of assessment procedures by the SC in progress.
		Revisions of MCs and SC RoPs to clarify responsibilities		
		Better define the workflow of NAMMCO advisory process	MCs & Secretariat	Graphic visualisations being prepared by the Secretariat
		Members to provide information to the relevant MCs on their management objectives, framework and plans, so the SC has a clear overview	Members & Secretariat	Overview conservation status and management framework being prepared by the Secretariat in cooperation with Members
	RC60, 61, 62	Continue and increase the use of the website as public information portal	Secretariat / organisation	Uploading of NAMMCO documents online for open access

	RC76	Develop a document consolidating NAMMCO financial rules and practices	Secretariat / FAC	Document being prepared by Secretariat
Precautionary approach in management	RC5, 31, 36, 38	MCs to more clearly define how the precautionary approach is applied in NAMMCO conservation and management, with focus on rebuilding depleted stocks	MCs & SC	
	RC36	To not postpone the 2021 ringed seal WG	SC	Ongoing studies in Greenland and Norway
	RC4iii, 6, 19, 22, 24, 38, 57	MCs to consider prioritising assessment effort, based on the SC overview of stock status	MCs & SC	SC developing list of NAMMCO Management Areas with assessment status
Communication efforts	RC7, 88, 89	Website to be the focus of communication and outreach efforts; completion and update priority for Secretariat Regular review of content by Committees following the process recommended by the FAC.	Secretariat, Committees	Secretariat update of population abundance and assessments on species page and last species prepared and uploaded The review of the website content by the Cs was implemented in 2020 and all the Cs are progressing with the quality check of the website content

APPENDIX 1: REQUEST FROM THE PRWG AND COMMITTEES' RESPONSE PROCESS

At its 27th meeting, the NAMMCO Council established an *ad hoc* Working Group to review and follow up on the recommendations made by the Performance Review (PRWG). At its first meeting (June 2019), the PRWG agreed to forward to the Committees the recommendations relevant to their work. It reviewed the recommendations and identified recommendations and issues for relevant Committees to consider.

The results of the consideration of the PRWG regarding specific recommendations were reflected in the PRWG' annotations to each recommendation (PRWG comments on the list of recommendations), so these considerations could also inform the committees' discussions.

The PRWG requested that all NAMMCO committees consider the recommendations and issues forwarded and provide a written response. The PRWG asked that the committees specifically:

- a) Consider the relevance of the recommendations.*
- b) Identify any other related matters for which they may have suggestions for improvements to their work and working procedures,*
- c) Propose ways for implementing the recommendations and improving processes, where relevant.*

The PRWG also asked that the discussions and recommendations of the committees be clearly and thoroughly substantiated and consider five general priorities:

- 1) High data quality and reliability*
- 2) Follow up process on the advice provided by the committees*
- 3) Transparency*
- 4) Precautionary approach*
- 5) Communication*

Process

Two documents were provided in advance of the committees' meeting. These were the full text of the performance review report and the request from the PRWG containing for each committee the list and full text of the relevant recommendations. The Scientific Committee (SC) was also provided with a brief summary of the relevant recommendations containing just the recommendations synthesised and extracted from detailed context descriptions. The Management Committees were provided with a document prepared by the Secretariat and summarising the main issues they should focus on.

The Committees on Hunting Methods (CHM), on Inspection and Observations (CIO) and the BYCELS Working Group (BYCELS) met week 40/2019 in Copenhagen. The discussions and replies were structured according to a, b and c described above, and the results are presented in sections 2 to 4.

The SC met week 44/2019 and followed a slightly different process (see section 5.1), as there were many more recommendations forwarded to them and the time for this agenda point was limited to one hour. The SC response is presented in sections 5.2 to 5.7.

The Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) met week 47/2019 and its response to the forwarded recommendations is presented in section 6.

The Management Committees (MCs) should have met in a joint meeting during the Annual Meeting planned for March 2020 to consider the request of the PRWG. As the 2020 Annual Meeting was postponed, the MCs considered the request at a dedicated meeting in February 2021.

APPENDIX 2: RESPONSE OF THE COMMITTEE ON INSPECTION & OBSERVATION – CIO

1. PR18-RC20 AND PR-RC25

PRWG comment pertaining to both recommendations: The priority is to ensure a reliable database (storage of data) with guidelines on data quality and sharing.

PR18-RC20

The Panel noted the low number of strandings reported and the absence of information on hunting effort and ship strikes in the NAMMCO data spreadsheet. Measures of hunting effort related to catches of some species could be obtained relatively easily from analyses of hunting licenses issued, logbooks and inspection and observation reports and interviews with hunters. The Panel recommended that ship strikes be reported more consistently.

CIO response:

- a) CIO noted that the recommendation primarily addresses reporting of ship strikes and that this is a concern under BYCELS and did not discuss it further
- b) Not considered
- c) Not considered

PR18-RC25

Recommendation relates to the question of standardising data reporting from Parties to NAMMCO, ensuring data quality and storage.

CIO response:

- a) CIO considered the recommendation highly relevant
- b) CIO strongly emphasised the importance of safe storage of data with suitable platform to ensure standardisation, continuity and accessibility. CIO also recommended that the Secretariat look at how data storage is handled in comparable fisheries organisations (NEAFC, NAFO, IWC)
- c) CIO drew attention to the already ongoing work undertaken by the committee to standardise annual reporting of data from Parties by extending the national progress reports to also include data from CIO/CHM/BYCELS in addition to SC. This work entails identification of which data should be submitted and in what format, one annual deadline for data submission and how and in which form the submitted data can become publicly available on the website

2. PR18-RC7

Recommendation to establish a formal procedure to review and update the NAMMCO website regularly. It is suggested that Committees together with the Secretariat periodically review and endorse their relevant sectors.

PRWG comment:

The website is the most important visibility and outreach tool of NAMMCO. Its content should be correct and updated. The Committees should be the guarantee of the quality of its content. The review of the content should be one of their recurrent tasks.

CIO response:

- a) CIO considered the recommendation highly relevant
- b) No further issues were identified
- c) CIO agreed to recommend the following 3-step process for its work to ensure the quality of the content:

1. to review all current text and information related to Inspection and Observation on the website
2. make reviewing new information on the website a standard agenda item for the annual meeting of the committee. If needed this may also be done by correspondence intersessional
3. consider how to make the work of the committee more visible, i. e. how to report on past observations and future plans, how to report on the evaluation of the Observation Scheme

Acknowledging the limited amount of text presently displayed on the website CIO agreed to carry out step 1 during the meeting.

3. PR18-RC54

Recommendation pertains to revise the Observation Scheme to make benefits and costs more balanced and the work more accessible to the public. Presently it does not give accurate information of a specific hunt over time, and if one of the objectives of the scheme is to obtain an accurate understanding of the level of compliance with national laws implementing NAMMCO recommendations, the Panel believes that significantly more resources will need to be devoted to the operation of the Observations Scheme.

PRWG comment:

- Seek input from CIO on priorities, effort to reach objective, and alternative methods.
- Prioritisation of observation activities could be assigned in relation to hunting levels.
- CIO to increase its visibility/transparency on the website.

CIO response:

- a) CIO noted that a new Observation Scheme is in place with new purpose and objectives. CIO also noted that the issue of transparency on website was dealt with under RC7.
- b) CIO noted that the idea of conducting regular audits of the national inspection programmes could be interesting. However, it would have to be further defined and considered in relation to the overall scope of the CIO ToR.
- c) New provisions and ongoing development of guidelines are the 1st step to meet the recommendation.

CIO agreed to the following elements for prioritisation of scope of observations:

- Hunting level
- Hunts not covered by national inspectors
- Implementation and compliance of new recommendations into national regulations
- Hunts where the SC or CHM request data
- Rotation between member countries
- Rotation between hunts (time interval when last observed)
- Maximising the effort to reach the objectives by allocating money from several years into one year
- Practicality of the exercise not feasible
 - small scale hunts that are happening infrequently and in remote areas

CIO discussed if and how the information collected through the logbooks or collected in connection with issuing licenses could be best used. What kind of analyses would be feasible based on the information? CIO agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting. Members would submit licences and logbooks to this end prior to the meeting.

APPENDIX 3: RESPONSE OF THE COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS – CHM

1. PR18-RC12, PR18-RC13, PR18-RC18, PR18-RC20, PR18-RC23, PR18-RC25, PR18-RC87

The recommendations related to the question of standardising data reporting from Parties to the Committees, ensuring data quality and storage. It also recommended working with other relevant IGOs (IWC) to avoid overlaps in deadlines and facilitate the data submission process.

PRWG comment: The priority is to ensure a reliable database (storage of data) with guidelines on data quality and sharing.

CHM response:

- a) CHM found all recommendations highly relevant except for PR18-RC20 which belonged to BYCELS
- b) CHM emphasised the importance of safe storage of data with suitable platform to ensure standardisation, continuity and accessibility.
- c) CHM drew attention to the already ongoing work undertaken by the committee to standardise annual reporting of data from Parties by extending the national progress reports to also include data from CIO/CHM/BYCELS in addition to SC. This work entails identification of which data should be submitted and in what format, one annual deadline for data submission and how and in which form the submitted data can become publicly available on the website.

2. PR18-RC50 AND PR18-RC51

Recommendations emphasised the need for CHM to continue its efforts to understand reasons for the different TTD and IDR rates in different hunts with the aim of improving these.

PRWG comment: Ongoing and one of the issues that future EGM will address.

CHM response:

- a) CHM found the recommendations highly relevant, and noted that this is part of the Committees ToR
- b) Nothing noted
- c) CHM will address these concerns in future EGM/WS, and new actions to be taken was envisaged to result from such EGM/WS. Monitoring and following up on previous recommendations to members is an ongoing task that encompasses this issue.

3. PR18-RC52 AND PR18-RC53

Recommendations to continue to define better methods for collecting data from all hunts on the occurrence of struck and lost (S/L) events and the circumstances surrounding those events. These efforts should continue in cooperation with SC and should also respond to the recommendations from the various workshop and expert group meetings.

PRWG comment: no specific comment given.

CHM response:

- a) CHM found the recommendations relevant
- b) CHM noted the need for member countries to improve the focus of and collection of S/L. CHM noted that it will continue to pursue the problem for all hunted marine mammals in NAMMCO and particularly related to hunts where:
 - data on S/L is not available
 - the data quality is not very high

- hunts identified by SC where accurate S/L are especially important for assessments
- CHM also agreed that when identifying target hunts considerations of a cost-benefit ratio should be made
- c) CHM pointed to the ongoing NORDECO project initiated by KNAPK in Greenland. The project looks at stimulating incorporation of local knowledge in decision-making. NAMMCO has been invited to participate in the project, and Fern Wickson from the Secretariat will attend a meeting in Nuuk in December. CHM has been asked by SC to give input on how to achieve reliable reporting from hunters. CHM emphasised that the fundament for reliable reporting would be reciprocal trust among the actor's hunters and scientists. A 1st step could be to establish a dialogue forum between hunters and scientists/managers to build trust and make a fundament for reliable reporting. Such a forum will also enhance NAMMCO's aim at involving user knowledge more. CHM recommended investigating if this could be developed into a pilot study financed through NORDECO with focus on struck and lost issue. Perhaps to be financed/incorporated to NAMMCO's part of the NORDECO

4. PR18-RC62

Recommendation considered the need for improving NAMMCO's transparency by including translating relevant legislation to English for the website

PRWG Comment: does CHM find this useful and if so should it be full text or synopsis?

CHM response:

- a) CHM found the recommendation relevant
- b) Nothing noted
- c) CHM noted that this has been on the list of things to do for some time now, but that this will now be prioritised as one of the current interns' tasks. CHM will look into how unauthorised translations of legal text should be dealt with. Already translated regulations will be made available on the website. Other key documents are already in English and available on the website.

5. PR18-RC7

Recommendation to establish a formal procedure to review and update the NAMMCO website regularly. It was suggested that Committees together with the Secretariat periodically reviewed and endorsed their relevant sectors.

PRWG comment: The website is the most important visibility and outreach tool of NAMMCO. Its content should be correct and updated. The Committees should be the guarantee of the quality of its content. The review of the content should be one of their recurrent tasks.

CHM response:

- a) CHM considered the recommendation highly relevant
- b) No further issues were identified
- c) CHM agreed to recommend the following 3-step process for its work to ensure the quality of the content on the website:
 1. to review all current text and information related to CHM on the website.
 2. make reviewing new information on the website a standard agenda item for the annual meeting of the committee. If needed this may also be done by correspondence intersessional
 3. consider how to make the work of CHM more visible

CHM agreed finalise step 1 by 31 December 2019. Members were tasked with reviewing all text on the website with the understanding that they would have the overall responsibility for the information pertaining to the species and hunts taking place in their respective countries. The Secretariat had made

an overview of all links related to CHM. To facilitate the editing process further Levermann volunteered to compile all exiting information into a word file that would be circulated to CHM and the Secretariat as soon as possible after the meeting.

6. GENERAL COMMENT

CHM welcomed the Performance Review Panels assessment of its work and its role in NAMMCO. It was noted with appreciation that the Panel concluded that CHM “together with the approval of its recommendations by the Council and implementation of these recommendations by member countries is one of the key elements that have made NAMMCO a credible organization”.

APPENDIX 4: RESPONSE OF THE BYCELS WORKING GROUP – BYCELS

1. PR18-RC7

Recommendation to establish a formal procedure to review and update the NAMMCO website regularly. It was suggested that Committees together with the Secretariat periodically reviewed and endorsed their relevant sectors.

PRWG comment: The website is the most important visibility and outreach tool of NAMMCO. Its content should be correct and updated. The Committees should be the guarantee of the quality of its content. The review of the content should be one of their recurrent tasks.

BYCELS response:

- a) BYCELS considered the recommendation highly relevant
- b) No further issues were identified
- c) BYCELS agreed to recommend the following 3-step process for its work to ensure the quality of the content on the website:
 1. to review all current text and information related to BYCELS on the website.
 2. make reviewing new information on the website a standard agenda item for the annual meeting of the committee. If needed, this may also be done by correspondence intersessional
 3. consider how to make the work of BYCELS more visible

BYCELS agreed to endeavour to finalise step 1 by the end of 2019. To accomplish this, members were tasked with reviewing all current text and information by 30 October 2019. The Secretariat had made an overview of all links related to BYCELS and to facilitate the editing process further the Secretariat would compile all information into one document and circulate it to BYCELS as soon as possible after the meeting.

2. PR18-RC13 AND PR18-RC25

Recommendation related to the question of standardising data reporting from Parties to the Committees, ensuring data quality and storage. It also recommended working with other relevant IGOs (IWC) to avoid overlaps in deadlines and facilitate the data submission process.

PRWG comment: The priority is to ensure a reliable database (storage of data) with guidelines on data quality and sharing.

BYCELS response:

- a) BYCELS considered the recommendation highly relevant
- b) BYCELS strongly emphasised the importance of safe storage of data with suitable platform to ensure standardisation, continuity and accessibility. BYCELS also recommended that the Secretariat look at how data storage is handled in comparable fisheries organisations (NEAFC, NAFO, IWC)
- c) BYCELS drew attention to the already ongoing work undertaken by the committee to standardise annual reporting of data from Parties by extending the national progress reports to also include data from CIO/CHM/BYCELS in addition to SC. This work entails identification of which data should be submitted and in what format, one annual deadline for data submission and how and in which form the submitted data can become publicly available on the website.

3. PR18-RC20

The recommendation was not part of the ones forwarded by PRWG to BYCELS. However, CIO had been asked to consider the recommendation and had concluded that it belonged to BYCELS.

The Panel noted the low number of strandings reported and the absence of information on hunting effort and ship strikes in the NAMMCO data spreadsheet. Measures of hunting effort related to catches of some species could be obtained relatively easily from analyses of hunting licenses issued, logbooks and inspection and observation reports and interviews with hunters. The Panel recommended that ship strikes be reported more consistently.

PRWG comment: a question of data quality.

BYCELS response:

- a) BYCELS found the recommendation to report ship strikes more consistently to be relevant and within its area of responsibility
- b) No further issues discussed
- c) NAMMCO member countries do not have regulations for reporting of ship strikes thus reporting has been based on voluntary, random reporting. BYCELS recognised that much work has been carried out by IWC and others on the issue of ship strikes. IWC has a global ship strike database functional since 2007. In 2019 a joint Workshop was held with IUCN and ACCOBAMS discussing ship strike hot spots.

BYCELS discussed the magnitude of the problem in member countries, occurrence of individual cases or if it happens frequently in certain hot spots or ship lanes, without reaching any conclusions. However, BYCELS agreed not to propose setting up a system for reporting of ship strikes to NAMMCO. Instead BYCELS recommended to look at how the IWC information on ship strike can become accessible to NAMMCO, both on an individual level (NAMMCO scientists) and organisational level (BYCELS).

APPENDIX 5: RESPONSE OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE – SC

1. PROCEDURE

During the SC 26th meeting in November 2019, the Secretariat facilitated an interactive process to help the SC identify which recommendations they deemed to be most relevant and to propose possible ways that the relevant recommendations could be implemented to improve their working processes. The results of this interactive exercise and discussion are presented in the following section.

It should be noted that some of the numbers used by the performance review panel (PRP) to structure and refer to their recommendations actually contained text presenting several recommendations. For example, the text under PRP18-RC5 included a recommendation to develop a systematic procedure for assessing stocks and species, together with a recommendation to develop the ability to transparently track actions on committee recommendations, and to implement research recommendations from the GROM. In cases such as this, the SC was presented with the recommendations as individual items and asked to assess their relevance for the SC. This means that the SC had the possibility to highlight some aspects as relevant but not all. Furthermore, in cases where there was overlap in the content of the recommendations being made across different numbers, these were summarised and synthesised for the SC as one recommendation (in SC/26/08), but with both reference numbers included. In the text below, the synthesised and summarised statements on the recommendations that were presented to the SC are used with the hope that this helps provide a document with clear and concise text. However, the associated reference numbers are also always provided, and these can be used to refer back to the full text from the performance review panel if additional context and explanation for the recommendations is required.

2. RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the process used to review and discuss the recommendations from the PRP at SC/26, the recommendations have been classified into the following categories: 1) Relevant and prioritised recommendations; 2) Relevant recommendations but not of high priority; 3) Relevant recommendations already being implemented. For those recommendations that were not highlighted by the SC as particularly relevant for their work, the following categories have also been used: 4) Additional recommendations already being addressed to some degree, and 5) Recommendations extending beyond the scope of the SC.

The recommendations in each of these categories and the proposals for implementation (where appropriate) are presented below.

3. RELEVANT AND PRIORITISED RECOMMENDATIONS

PRP18-RC10: Include impacts from other anthropogenic activities beyond hunting

This is a recommendation of high relevance for ensuring a data quality and a precautionary approach to management. The SC noted that good work is already being done to implement this recommendation through the current requirement that working groups (WGs) include other anthropogenic impacts on their agendas. It was also noted that the cumulative impact of all anthropogenic activities is captured in the parameters used in the current population models. It was, however, also acknowledged that there were ways to further improve the work being done on this topic.

Proposals for implementation & improvement:

- Place more weight and emphasis on the topics of pollution and climate change in the work of the WGs.

- Enhance collaboration with those working on the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) of the Arctic Council as a way to enhance the knowledge on pollution within NAMMCO, for example by inviting experts working on this program to present findings of relevance to the WGs or SC.
- Prioritise and fund the collection of life history data to support a good time series for species of relevance to NAMMCO.
- Revise the SC agenda so that every item does not need to be covered every year. This would allow more time and attention to be dedicated to topics such as other anthropogenic impacts as appropriate.

PRP18-RC26: Investigate structured cooperation with the IWC SC & develop a robust use of external expertise

This is a recommendation of high relevance for ensuring high data quality and reliability as well as a good way to enhance transparency and communication. This recommendation was one that the SC felt that they were already working to implement (e.g. through the established cooperation with the IWC Abundance Estimate Working Group and the existing practice of inviting external experts to participate in WG meetings). However, it was also recognised that further improvements were still possible.

Proposals for implementation & improvement:

- In addition to inviting external experts to participate in WG meetings, invitations could also be extended to relevant external experts to participate in the meetings of the SC. This could include members of the IWC SC.
- Invitations to external experts need to be sent out in a timely fashion to enhance the possibility that they are able to attend.
- Additional funding be made available to allow a wider range of external experts to be invited to attend NAMMCO meetings.

PRP18-RC31: Consider developing stock specific reference points and management actions that will be taken if these reference points are exceeded

This is a relevant recommendation for advancing a precautionary approach to management and can also assist in providing grounds for clear and transparent communication regarding advice. This was a recommendation that the SC was motivated to work on in the near term. Such reference points were noted as available and in use for some species (e.g. harp and hooded seals), while there were additional species for which stock specific reference points could also be useful, including narwhal and walrus.

Proposals for implementation & improvement:

- Review the stock specific reference points and advice rules used by other organisations.
- Obtain clear management objectives for the different species and stocks.
- Implement a case by case approach to articulating stock specific reference points and advice rules and in the beginning focus on doing this work for species with small stocks.
- Ask all WGs to consider articulating possible reference points of relevance.
- Consider holding specific meetings to develop reference points for those prioritised species that have a clear stock structure.
- Consider establishing an *ad hoc* WG to examine general issues related to developing such reference points and management advice prior to focusing on species specific work.
- Establish a new process through which scientists and managers may have closer contact and work together to develop management plans.

PRP18-RC41: Consider articulating rebuilding plans for any stocks found to be depleted

This is a relevant recommendation for advancing a precautionary approach to management. Although there was some disagreement about whether it was the role of the SC to develop such rebuilding plans,

there was a sense that this was an important issue and there was a degree of motivation within the SC to advance on this.

Proposals for implementation & improvement:

- The SC could consider this issue in its future efforts to develop reference points and harvest rules and could review for inspiration the way WGHARP (the joint ICES/NAFO/NAMMCO Working Group on Harp and Hooded Seals) incorporates plans for rebuilding in their harvest rules.
- Rebuilding plans could be developed in a way that considered not just reducing or halting the harvest of depleted stocks, but also the impacts from by-catch and other anthropogenic activities. Management decisions could then include actions directed towards these activities as well.
- The management committees (MCs) could feed into the process of articulating rebuilding plans for depleted stocks by describing those actions they see as important to implement and/or those already being taken at a management level.

4. RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS BUT NOT OF HIGH PRIORITY FOR THE SC

PRP18-RC79: Establish a formal procedure for reviewing and updating information on the NAMMCO website, with periodic review and endorsement from all relevant committees

This is a relevant recommendation for improving communication and particularly data quality in communication. The SC noted that a plan for doing this was agreed at SC/26 and that this new approach would begin to be implemented at their next meeting. It is also worth noting that although this was recognised as a relevant recommendation for ensuring data quality in NAMMCO's communication with a general public audience, it was not work that the SC expressed motivation to perform and was therefore not considered a top priority.

Proposals for implementation & improvement:

- The proposal that was agreed at SC/26 and which will be implemented for SC/27 is that there be a 5-year cycle for reviewing each species, with the information on a certain number of species (e.g. 4-5) being reviewed each year during the annual SC meeting. The species selected for review in any given year will be determined by the Secretariat on the basis of the importance of the species for the NAMMCO countries and the perceived need for updated information.
- The Secretariat will update the website with new information following each WG meeting.
- SC members will send the Secretariat new publications (authored by its members or others), that are of relevance to NAMMCO and can be used to update the website.

5. RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS ALREADY BEING IMPLEMENTED

PRP18-RC5: Develop the ability to transparently track actions on committee recommendations

This is a relevant recommendation for following up on the implementation of the advice provided by the committees, however the SC felt that there were already adequate processes in place for this.

PRP18-RC5: Develop a systematic procedure for assessing species and stocks

This is a relevant recommendation for ensuring data quality and reliability and the implementation of a precautionary approach. The SC emphasised the importance and relevance of having a systematic procedure for assessing species and stocks, but also felt like such a procedure was already in place and part of the operational practice of NAMMCO. The SC did not see the need nor advantage of having a single management procedure. The reasoning behind this position is outlined in the response to Council request R1.6.6 for a description and appropriateness of the management procedures used in NAMMCO presented in the SC/26 report, agenda item 5.7.

PRP18-RC9&19: Ensure that accurate estimates of by-catch are provided for all population assessments and encourage national by-catch monitoring systems based on independent observers

The SC highlighted this as a relevant recommendation with the potential to improve data quality and reliability, as well as to help inform a precautionary approach to management. However, it believed that the extensive ongoing work within the by-catch working group (BYCWG) constituted an adequate response. The SC urges the different parties to respond positively and timely to the BYCWG request for information and data.

PRP18-12&18: Have member countries agree on a standard format for reporting and implementing struck and lost data in NPRs and the catch database

This is a relevant recommendation for data reliability and communication and can be useful for following up on the implementation of advice in some cases. The SC recognised that this is important for the organisation but noted work towards this is already well underway – e.g. see the agreement to having a common format for reporting and their suggestions for additions to this under agenda item 5.3.3 of the SC/26 report.

PRP18-RC18: Continue efforts to reduce struck and lost and obtain reliable reporting

This is a relevant recommendation for ensuring data quality and reliability, as well as to help inform a precautionary approach to management. The SC recognised the importance of this issue but also felt that efforts were underway to improve struck and lost reporting, drawing attention to agenda item 5.3.1 in the SC/26 report, where the SC emphasised that the use of independent observer programs in selected hunts was still a necessary way to validate the reliability of user reporting.

PRP18-RC23: Establish a searchable catch database and consider including all human-induced mortality and a sighting database (potentially with the IWC)

This is a relevant recommendation for communication, transparency and data quality. The SC noted that sufficient work was already being done to implement this, highlighting that the Secretariat had now made a searchable catch database, that common reporting formats for all human induced mortality are in development by the CHM, BYCELLS and SC, and that discussions with the IWC about collaborating on the development of common databases is ongoing.

6. ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS ALREADY BEING ADDRESSED TO SOME DEGREE

These recommendations were not highlighted by the SC in their assessment of relevance. However, the Secretariat wishes to note the efforts that are underway towards implementation of these recommendations.

PRP18-RC5: Implement research recommendations from the GROM together with other international and national authorities.

Research remains ongoing for monodontid species and there have been some advances on this since the GROM (e.g. see the report of the *ad hoc* working group on narwhal in East Greenland). Additional funding may, however, be required to fully implement all of the research recommendations. No initiative has been taken towards developing a collaboration with Canada on implementing the recommendations.

PRP18-RC12: Coordinate data collection formats and deadlines with other IGOs (e.g. IWC)

The work currently being done to develop a common format and deadline for reporting across all NAMMCO committees (see SC/26 agenda item 5.3.3 and processes started by the different committees ahead of NAMMCO 27) can be seen as foundational work that it is important to complete before attempting to coordinate data collection with other organisations (if this is desirable).

PRP18-RC36: Update the ringed seal assessment and develop an appropriate forum for Greenland and Canada to manage the shared stock.

There are plans to hold a ringed seal working group to update the assessment from 1996, with the potential to also discuss the establishment of an appropriate forum to manage shared stocks. SC/26 proposed that this WG be delayed until 2022 to allow for ongoing studies in Greenland and Norway to be completed so that they could inform the WG.

PRP18-RC79: Examine alternative options for scheduling NAMMCO meetings

There is a process underway on this, with the topic being on the agenda for the FAC November 2019 meeting. SC/25 made an initial proposal for an alternative meeting schedule and an explanation for why this was seen as preferable. SC/26 provided additional inputs to this proposal as well as an additional option for consideration. (Cf. FAC/2019-02/08)

PRP18-RC87: Develop a centralised database on stock assessments (abundance and removals data) as well as for the evaluation of trends in hunters' safety and hunting efficiency.

On the point of most relevance to the SC regarding a centralised database on stock assessments, important foundations laying the groundwork for this are now in place. This includes the development of the online catch database (see SC/26 5.3.2), the work towards a common reporting format for all removals data (see SC/26 5.3.3) and agreement on the overview of management units relevant to NAMMCO for each species (see SC/26 5.2.1, and appendix 4).

7. RECOMMENDATIONS EXTENDING BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE SC

PRP18-RC28&29: Clarify the different roles of the SC, MCs and Council; especially why MCs may take decisions deviating from the SC advice and eliminate the chances that such deviations occur. Develop RoPs defining the relationship between MCs and SC, their interaction, and how MCs use SC advice

This was viewed as a recommendation with the potential to improve communication and the follow up process on the advice provided by the committees. However, the SC did not see as their responsibility to take action to implement this recommendation. It was therefore deemed beyond the scope of the SC responsibility; however, it still offered a proposal for implementation.

Proposals for implementation & improvement:

- Council develops a statement and/or graphic to clarify the different roles of the various NAMMCO committees and explain why MCs may take decisions that differ from SC advice.

PRP18-RC87: Create a document that specifies the accessibility of data within and outside NAMMCO, the data quality control process, deadlines for data submission etc

The SC made no comment on this recommendation.

8. CONCLUSION

At its 26th meeting, the SC began the process of considering the results and recommendations of the 2018 performance review. It highlighted those recommendations that it deemed most relevant to improving its work and provided proposals for how the implementation of these recommendations could be approached. It also highlighted where work was already being carried out to address particular recommendations, as well as indicated the recommendations that fell outside the scope of the SC. Given the comprehensive nature of the performance review and the range of recommendations made, the process of response and implementation will necessarily require more time. The SC has however now articulated a clear list of those recommendations that it deems to be relevant and prioritised for action and highlighted several possible avenues for pursuing implementation. This represents an important and necessary first step in the process of learning from the performance review and using this to improve working practices.

APPENDIX 6: RESPONSE OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE – FAC

The FAC was requested by the PRWG to consider specifically 9 recommendations. Recommendation PR18-RC7 dealt with outreach and the species information available on the website, the remaining were of organisational, administrative and financial characters (PR18-RC73, 76, 77, 79, 82, 83, 84 and 85).

1. PROCEDURE FOR REVIEWING THE CONTENT OF THE WEBSITE

Referring to recommendation **PR18-RC7**, the website was the most important visibility and outreach tool of NAMMCO. Its content shall be correct and updated. The Committees should be the guarantee of the quality of its content. The review of the content should be one of their recurrent tasks. The PRWG had therefore tasked the FAC to establish a general procedure for reviewing the content of the website, including updates, based on the input forwarded by the committees on the issue.

FAC reviewed the ways forward proposed by the CHM, CIO and BYCELS and agreed with these. With respect to the SC proposal, FAC added some text related to the update on stock assessments, which are highlighted in blue below.

The agreed proposed procedures for the different committees are described below:

CHM, CIO, BYCELS

The Committees agreed to recommend the following 3-step process for its work to ensure the quality of the content:

1. Each committee will review all current text and information related to the committee on the website.
2. Make reviewing new information on the website a standard agenda item for the annual meeting of the committees. If needed this may also be done by correspondence intersessional
3. Consider how to make the work of the committee more visible on the website

CIO finalised step 1 during their October 2019 meeting. Members of CHM and BYCELS agreed to finalise step 1 by 31 December 2019. Information on the web related to the work area of CHM are by far the most comprehensive of the three committees. It was agreed that all text should be reviewed by everyone with the understanding that members would have the overall responsibility for the information pertaining to the species and hunts taking place in their respective countries.

SC

- The proposal agreed at SC/26 and which will be implemented from SC/27 is that there be a 5-year cycle for reviewing each species, with the information on a certain number of species (e.g. 4-5) being reviewed each year during the annual SC meeting. The species selected for review in any given year will be determined by the Secretariat on the basis of the importance of the species for the NAMMCO countries and the perceived need for updated information.
- The Secretariat will update the website with new information following all SC related meetings. **However, updates on stock assessment shall be reviewed by the SC before being implemented. The texts of the update will be prepared by the Secretariat and reviewed by the chair of the SC and the related WG Chair before being uploaded.**
- SC members will send the Secretariat new publications (authored by its members or others), that are of relevance to NAMMCO and can be used to update the website.

2. RULES FOR SECRETARIAT FOR MANAGING FUNDS

Recommendation **PR18-RC76** addressed the needs for rules or guidelines for managing external funding and FAC was tasked to consider the relevance of this recommendation.

Unlike other organisations, NAMMCO does not have one document collating established financial rules and practices, rather these are dispersed in many different types of documents including Council and FAC meeting reports, Host Agreement and Staff Rules. The Secretariat provided an overview of the financial rules and practices presently adopted in NAMMCO.

FAC agreed that it would be beneficial to develop a more formal document describing the current rules and practices for managing internal and external funds in NAMMCO and asked the Secretariat to consolidate the document prepared by looking at financial rules from relevant organisations and to prepare draft financial rules and practices that FAC could consider at its next meetings.

3. DATES FOR COUNCIL AND SC MEETINGS

Recommendation **PR18-RC79** addresses the possibility of fostering a greater work efficiency and providing more time to the Scientific Committee to respond to Council's requests by modifying the present sequence of meetings with the Council meeting in spring and the scientific committee meeting in autumn. Independently, SC/25 had also proposed an inversion of sequence for reducing possible delays in the process from the formulation of a request for advice, and the advice being forwarded to parties and implemented. NAMMCO 27 had tasked FAC to consider the issue.

FAC saw the main arguments for NOT convening Council meetings in the autumn as:

- Member countries will not have time to prepare for the implementation of management advices in the following year
- Fisheries negotiations take place from October to December
- IWC Commission meetings are held in September/October
- Convening Council meetings in late August/beginning of September is not optimal from an organisational point of view as the summer holiday period has just ended

FAC recommended that NAMMCO adopt the following scenario: SC meetings and Council meetings be held in the first half of the year with SC in early spring from mid-February and Council meetings from mid-May. This option structures all annual meetings of NAMMCO committees to be held before summer and clears the 2nd half for holding working and expert groups meeting, and any *ad hoc* events. The time elapsed between the SC and Council meetings shall be sufficiently long to enable the finalisation of the report, its translation and its circulation at national levels before the meeting of the management committees, i.e., at a minimum 2 months.

4. SECRETARIAT'S WORKLOAD AND PRIORITIES

The remaining recommendations deals with allocation of resources both humane and financial, priorities and Secretariat staffing.

As required by Council 27, FAC has completed a review of the NAMMCO pension schemes and adopted a unique pension scheme to take into effect in 2020, which will be cheaper with more predictable expenses. In the spirit of minimizing resource use, FAC agreed to schedule a single face to face meeting in combination with the annual meetings and otherwise have online meetings.

The Secretariat had repeatedly alerted to the increased and increasing workload at the Secretariat, in part because of the increasing number of stocks dealt with since 1992 (6 species in 1995 and 21 in 2018), the increasing number of meetings and the increasing outreach tasks, with in particular the completion and maintenance of the website. In parallel, the staffing of the Secretariat has remained the same since 1995.

Council 27 recommended “that a more focused intersessional discussion be undertaken among member countries and the Secretariat on the priorities of the Commission and the ability and capacity of the Secretariat to fulfil the tasks assigned”.

FAC continues the principle discussion initiated in May by the PRWG on the priorities of the Commission and the prioritisation of the tasks assigned to the Secretariat. FAC requested more detailed information on time spent on different tasks at the Secretariat. To alleviate the workload of the Secretariat in 2020 and allow a high focus on the completion and update of the website, FAC decided to drastically reduce attendance to outreach events, as well as minimising representation activities. FAC reiterated that the website is the most important visibility and outreach tool of NAMMCO, its content should be correct and updated.

Such a reprioritisation is a short-term action that should not hinder a commitment to have more in depth discussion on staffing needs in the long term. It is a fact that the workload of the Secretariat has increased (due to among other things the increase in the number of topics/species covered by the different committees and in the number of standing Working Groups). However, given the current resource situation there is no room for increasing the staff in the short term.

FAC also noted that it is the Council that generates the workload and thus the Council must also be conscious of the implications of its proposed priorities. The focus should be on core issues for the organisation. In conclusion, FAC agreed that the discussion on the Secretariat staffing should continue and the issue looked at in more detail in the future.

APPENDIX 7: RESPONSE OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES – MCS

In preparation for the meeting of the Management Committees, the Secretariat had prepared a document that collated the MC specific recommendations, highlighting the following five overarching issues identified by the PRWG:

- a) Application of a precautionary approach in the framework of NAMMCO
- b) Rebuilding plans for depleted stocks
- c) Prioritisation of assessment efforts
- d) Facilitating responses of the Scientific Committee to requests for advice
- e) Management Committees and the Scientific Committee: prerogatives and relationship

The meeting focused on the response of the MCs to the recommendations from the PRP on these five main issues.

1. APPLICATION OF A PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH

One of the areas where the PRP saw potential for further development and improvement within NAMMCO was in its definition and application of a precautionary approach to management. While the PRP recognised that precaution is an important concept within NAMMCO, it made a number of recommendations related to how the organisation could develop a more structured approach to the operationalisation of a precautionary approach to management. Specifically, the PRP referred to the definition of a precautionary approach as provided in Article 6 of the 1995 UN Fish Stock Agreement (provided as NAMMCO/MCJ-February-2021/FI02) and indicated that developing a harvest strategy approach similar to that used within fisheries management (with stock-specific reference points and associated management actions) would be a useful way to proceed.

Several meeting documents were provided as background information to inform the discussion on this item, including overviews on harvest strategies, reference points, and control rules as used within fisheries management. Dr C. Fortuna, Chair of the Performance Review Panel (PRP) gave a short presentation prepared together with R. Smith, co-member of the PRP. The presentation noted that except for a few stocks, NAMMCO did not currently work with harvest strategies (including stock specific reference points) or harvest control rules (including monitoring, assessment and associated management actions that are automatically taken if a reference point is exceeded). The presentation outlined how these approaches were understood and applied within fisheries management, as well as why they were important mechanisms for managing uncertainty and providing transparent approaches to management and foreseeable actions when certain conditions were met.

Discussion

All parties thanked Fortuna for her informative presentation and reiterated their appreciation for the extensive work carried out by the PRP.

Norway emphasised that it implements precaution in all areas of marine mammal management and that the concept had always been important for NAMMCO. They also suggested that it was both timely and useful to discuss how NAMMCO could be clearer in its approach to operationalising a precautionary approach to management. They proposed that work to deal with the topic in a systematic way across the organisation be carried out and that the Scientific Committee (SC) be involved. It was suggested that an appropriate way to advance on this would be to suggest that Council make a formal request for advice on this topic to the SC.

Iceland agreed that working to further develop and clarify how NAMMCO operationalised a precautionary approach to management was important and that the SC should be involved. It did, however, seek clarification on whether the advice currently received on baleen whale stocks generated through the Revised Management Procedure (RMP) of the International Whaling Commission (IWC)

met the requirements of a precautionary approach as described in the presentation, or whether further articulation of reference limits etc would also be required for these species. Fortuna confirmed that the RMP used by the IWC implements a precautionary approach to management and that further elaboration would not be required for the stocks for which this approach was applied. She also noted that while the PRP highlighted the importance of developing a consistent approach within NAMMCO, this did not necessarily mean that the same framework had to be applied for all species/cases, but rather that there was value in having a consistent overarching strategy and definition.

Greenland also expressed its support for operating with precautionary approaches to management and having a definition that is consistent, agreed and understood by all. However, they questioned how consistency may be achieved given the different ways in which the IWC and NAMMCO approach the generation of management advice. They also emphasised that the differences between science and user knowledge would need to be taken into account in any development of harvest strategies or control rules.

The Faroe Islands noted that it was familiar with the precautionary approach to management used within fisheries and suggested that it would be important to consider what type of changes or modifications may be required to adapt such an approach to the different context of marine mammals.

Fortuna noted that precaution as it is operationalised within fisheries management aims to create an industry that is sustainable over the long-term. As such, precautionary approaches to management were not against using a resource, but rather were focused on implementing measures to ensure that resources were managed sustainably and could therefore continue being used indefinitely.

The MCJ agreed that this recommendation from the PRP was important and relevant and that NAMMCO should work to more clearly articulate how the precautionary approach is operationalised and consistently applied within the organisation.

The MCJ also agreed that it would be valuable to define its precautionary approach to management more specifically through developing harvest strategies, including reference limits and harvest control rules. It was agreed that this process should involve the SC and recognise the importance of taking both science and user knowledge into account.

The MCJ recommended that the PRWG propose to Council that a request be made to the SC to clarify NAMMCO's precautionary approach to management through the development of harvest strategies (including stock-specific reference points and harvest control rules).

The Chair of the MCJ, together with interested parties, agreed to provide draft text for the proposed request for further discussion at the next MCJ meeting during the annual meeting in March.

2. REBUILDING PLANS FOR DEPLETED STOCKS

The PRP noted that NAMMCO does not have rebuilding plans for depleted (and/or extirpated) stocks and the MCJ discussed whether these should be developed.

Discussion

The Secretariat noted that at both its 26th and 27th meetings, the SC had made recommendations that NAMMCO develop a principle-based approach to dealing with small or depleted stocks.

The MCJ agreed that although it would be valuable to have guidelines for rebuilding plans developed by the SC, any implementation of these would be at the discretion of the Member Countries.

The MCJ recommended that the rebuilding of small or depleted stocks be included in the proposed work to more clearly define NAMMCOs precautionary approach to management (as described under 2.1) and that it should therefore be incorporated as an issue to be addressed in the request.

3. PRIORITISATION OF ASSESSMENT EFFORTS

The PRP recommended that as part of NAMMCO's work to develop a more strategic approach, it should establish a systematic way to prioritise the assessments of the different species and stocks. It noted that this should include prioritisation based on factors such as the biological status of the stock ("unknown", "of concern" etc).

Working documents NAMMCO/MCJ-February-2021/05a&b provided an overview of the different cetacean and pinniped species and management areas in the purview of NAMMCO, information on whether they had been assessed, and the year in which they were last assessed.

Discussion

Greenland noted that although it might be useful to discuss general principles, Member Countries may have different approaches to prioritisation and any position on priorities that may be taken by NAMMCO as an organisation would have to be coordinated with the Member Countries.

The Chair of Council noted that NAMMCO has two different Management Committees and each of these may formulate priorities for their specific areas of responsibility (i.e., pinniped and cetacean species), as well as for the issues of shared concern that are handled in joint meetings (e.g., environmental and ecosystem issues).

Iceland asked for clarification regarding whether the approach to prioritisation being discussed was intended to cover existing or future requests for advice. It was noted that the recommendation from the PRP to develop a systematic approach and define the factors for determining when assessments would be required/prioritised was of a general character.

The Chair of Council noted that Council sets the priorities for the SC and is therefore the appropriate body within NAMMCO for taking decisions regarding any prioritisation of requests.

The Member Countries noted that the organisation already follows some implicit rules regarding how assessments are prioritised (e.g., prioritising hunted stocks, species with important roles in the ecosystems, and the needs of member countries). It therefore agreed that there was no pressing need to develop a systematic approach for prioritising assessments at this point. It did, however, acknowledge that the issue would be returned to in a future meeting if further clarification was required.

4. FACILITATING RESPONSES OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE TO REQUESTS FOR ADVICE

The PRP concluded that the SC would be better able to provide relevant advice to the NAMMCO Member Countries if the MCs identified the relevant management objectives when formulating recommendations concerning scientific research and requests for advice.

Prior to this meeting, an excel sheet to collate an overview of existing management objectives for all cetacean and pinniped species in the different sub-areas of relevance to NAMMCO was created and circulated to Members

Discussion

The MCJ agreed that management objectives were important for effective conservation and management and noted that they are defined by Member Countries rather than NAMMCO as an organisation.

Recognising that it was important that the assessments performed within NAMMCO be aware of management objectives, the MCJ recommended that member countries provide information on the management objectives that exist for the different species and stocks of relevance to NAMMCO.

The MCJ acknowledged that having an overview of management objectives was useful but agreed that the excel files that had been circulated were still in a preliminary draft form and should therefore be limited to internal use at this stage. It recommended that Member Countries provide the Secretariat with the information still missing in the overview tables.

5. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES & SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE: PREROGATIVES AND RELATIONSHIP

The PRP noted circumstances in which the MCs did not follow the advice of the SC and how this created some tension between NAMMCO bodies. The PRP therefore recommended that Rules of Procedure be developed to define the relationship between the MCs and the SC and how they interact. The PRP proposed that these rules confirm the different areas of responsibility of the MCs and the SC and address how the MCs use SC advice in their recommendations for conservation and management measures.

In the SC response to this particular recommendation from the PRP, it was proposed that one way forward would be to create graphic illustrations of the workflow within NAMMCO, the process for generating management advice, and some text describing the roles and responsibilities of the different actor groups within the organisation. The SC noted that this could specifically include the different matters taken into consideration by the SC and the MC, and that this may help explain why these committees can reach differing conclusions regarding management advice.

Draft illustrations of how management advice is generated in NAMMCO were provided to help inform the discussion, together with the current Rules of Procedure for the MCs and the SC.

Discussion

Although the MCJ felt that the PRP had not been entirely clear in its reasoning for this recommendation, it was acknowledged that there are currently no terms of reference for the MCs, beyond the general information provided in Article 5 of the NAMMCO Agreement. It was also noted that although Rules of Procedure tend to primarily deal with procedural issues, these could be expanded to clarify the scope of work of the MCs.

The MCJ discussed the value of defining specific terms of reference for the MCs, as well as the importance of clearly articulating the reasons behind MC decisions, especially when they do not follow SC advice. The sufficiency of the current draft graphic illustrations created by the Secretariat were also discussed, including what constituted an appropriate and accurate location for user knowledge in the workflow.

Consensus was not obtained on the matter of defining terms of reference for the MCs.

The MCJ agreed with the SC that having a graphic visualisation of the relationship between the different component parts of NAMMCO and the workflow of the advisory process would be clarifying and useful.

The MCJ recommended that all reports from MC meetings clearly articulate the reasons why decisions are made, and that particular attention be given to this in cases where decisions are taken that differ from the advice provided by the SC.

APPENDIX 8: LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REVIEW PANEL

With comments from the PRWG, and assignment to relevant NAMMCO bodies for further consideration

Status: N/A, not applicable; NFAN, notes and no further action needed, ONG, ongoing.

Referred to: “noted”, no further follow-up action by NAMMCO is proposed by the PRWG; “N/A”, considered not applicable by the PRWG.

All: Cs, committees, CNL, Council, MCJ, Joint Management Committees; MCs, Management Committees; CIO, Committee on Inspection and Observation, CHM, Committee on Hunting Methods, SC, Scientific Committee; BYCELS, Working Group on BYCELS, FAC, Finance and Administration Committee.

Recommendations pertaining to the same issues, and therefore the same PRWG comment have been grouped under a shade of grey.

Overarching recommendations	PRWG comments	Referred to:
<p>[PRP18-RC4] The Panel also recommends that NAMMCO develop and implement a Strategic Plan (SP) to help it focus its efforts and better guide decision-making across the organization.</p> <p>In developing its Strategic Plan, the Commission will need to clearly define its objectives, drawing upon the objective set out in the NAMMCO Agreement as informed by the Preamble to the Agreement as well as, perhaps, more contemporary documents such as the Nuuk Declaration and the statement on the NAMMCO website that is discussed above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Plan should also define priorities for the organization to help decision-makers with difficult choices among competing demands. • In addition to setting priorities, the Strategic Plan should identify long- and short-term goals for the organization. These should be accompanied by a multi-annual budget that would allow a coherent use of available financial and human resources. • Guidelines on how to deal with contingencies, including financial and staffing aspects of NAMMCO should also be drafted. See sections 2.7.1.2 and 2.7.1.3 (detailed criterion 6.1.1) in this Chapter for more on these aspects. • It should also include a mechanism for the regular review of whether these goals have been attained or whether the organization is still on the path for achieving them. Also, it should provide for periodic consideration of whether these goals continue to be the right ones. • The Panel believes that, if properly implemented, the ongoing SWOT analyses of the Council, its subsidiary bodies and the Secretariat will provide useful input into the Strategic Plan. • Finally, as a public institution, NAMMCO should develop its Strategic Plan as transparently as possible and invite the participation of relevant stakeholders in the process. 	<p>Refers to the discussion on priorities, item 4</p>	<p>Strategy discussion</p> <p>Discussion on priorities</p>

<p>The Panel encourages the Commission to consider recommendations included throughout this report and consolidated in Chapter 3 when developing its Strategic Plan. Some of the broad issues for consideration include:</p>		
<p>i) explicitly defining the geographical scope of the application of the Agreement including whether it extends beyond the EEZs of member countries, taking account of marine mammal species ecology (including their ranges),</p>	<p>Not an issue for NAMMCO as an organisation, but members may want to look at it more closely</p>	<p>Parties</p>
<p>ii) expanding NAMMCO membership to include other countries bordering the North Atlantic that harvest marine mammals,</p>	<p>Open invitation to CA and RU - Ongoing since inception</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>iii) identifying and prioritizing the stocks to be managed by NAMMCO;</p>	<p>Refers to precautionary approach</p>	<p>Discussion on priorities</p>
<p>iv) updating and implementing a communications strategy that reflects the objectives of the organization;</p>	<p>Refers to priorities</p>	<p>Discussion on priorities</p>
<p>v) securing sufficient resources to allow the Commission to meet its goals;</p>	<p>Refers to priorities</p>	<p>Discussion on priorities</p>
<p>vi) strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat to support the work of the Commission (see also section 2.7.1.3).</p>	<p>Relates to resources and capacity question</p>	<p>Discussion on priorities</p>
<p>At the same time, the Panel believes that NAMMCO should consider developing clearer operational guidelines related to working methods of all NAMMCO subsidiary bodies.</p>		
<p>Elements to be included in the Strategic Plan:</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC6] In general, the Panel recommends that the Council, when developing a Strategic Plan that details the objectives, goals and priorities for NAMMCO, include principles on prioritization of research and advice on species and stocks in relation to its objectives and targets.</p>		<p>Discussion on priorities</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC57] ... The Panel reiterates that the NAMMCO Strategic Plan includes a process for prioritizing the stocks for which NAMMCO will improve data collection and prepare and recommend conservation and management measures.</p>		<p>Discussion on priorities</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC38] The Panel recommends that as part of its efforts to develop a Strategic Plan, the Council consider how to make the process of developing conservation and management measures for stocks that have not been previously managed more efficient. This should include prioritizing stocks based on factors including the biological status of the stock ("unknown," "of concern," etc.). It may also include expanding NAMMCO's efforts to collect the data that is necessary to make determinations about which stocks are priorities and to conduct assessments of those stocks that are deemed priorities.</p>	<p>Concerns poorly managed species/stocks. Are we effective and efficient in our management processes? Relates to management objectives, application of</p>	<p>MCJ</p>

<p>In addition, Council, as part of its development of a Strategic Plan, may wish to consider expanding the level of support that the Secretariat can provide to the scientific enterprise, in the context of the more general recommendation that the Commission consider strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat to support its work.</p>	<p>precautionary approach, quality of data.</p>	
<p>[PRP18-RC8] [The Panel] therefore recommends that in developing its Strategic Plan, the Council give careful consideration to the role of the Commission in developing a model for applying an ecosystem approach to the management of marine resources given all relevant factors including (a) the complexity of the issues, (b) the work being done by other bodies (for example, the IWC, CCAMLR and ICES), (c) the availability of resources for NAMMCO to pursue this work and other NAMMCO priorities. This would allow the correct use of financial and human resources.</p>	<p>Already ongoing, continues</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC25] the Panel recommends the inclusion and revision of the current NAMMCO data sharing procedures in the discussion around a NAMMCO Strategic Plan, as data production and sharing are important for successful management.</p>	<p>Priority - Question of data quality: Strong attention to be given and action needed. (see comments to the recommendations on data quality)</p>	<p>Committees</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC54] The Panel believes that the first step in a reform effort should be to clearly define, in NAMMCO's overall Strategic Plan, NAMMCO's objectives for observing the hunts of marine mammals in NAMMCO's area. If the Council decides that continuing the operation of the Observation scheme is in the strategic interests of the Commission, it should also consider how to make the results of that work more easily accessible to stakeholders.</p>	<p>Ongoing with the review of the Scheme. Now twofold: a) observation of hunting, 2) implementation of advice by parties. New part B has been adopted by CNL27, part A in review by CIO.</p>	<p>CIO</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC55] ... The Panel encourages NAMMCO to consider, in the process of developing a Strategic Plan, how it might appropriately expand the role of user knowledge in its work.</p>	<p>Organisation and Parties continue to give attention. More visibility needed</p>	<p>CNL, website</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC78] Finally, the Panel is of the view that all the issues referred to in this section [financial prioritization and budget] should be dealt with in the context of a Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>Refers to strategy // priorities discussion, see item 4</p>	<p>Discussion on priorities</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC80] ... The Panel recommends that issues identified as a result of this situation [delayed hiring of ScSec] and other personnel issues be addressed in accordance with any Strategic Plan that is developed.</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC83] ... The issue of restructuring the Secretariat should be part of the development of a Strategic Plan.</p>		

<p>[PRP18-RC86] ... Therefore again, the Panel recommends that NAMMCO should define, while developing a Strategic Plan, the relative priorities among various commission functions including science, communications, and outreach. The Strategic Plan should inform all decision making with respect to the work of the Commission including the allocation of human and financial resources.</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC68] ... Cooperation with other relevant international organization should also be part of the NAMMCO Strategic Plan.</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC88] The Panel urges the Commission to integrate the Communication and outreach strategy into a broader overall strategy for NAMMCO.</p>		
<p>AREA 1 – CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF STOCKS</p>	<p>PRWG comments</p>	<p>Referred to:</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC5] ...The Panel views these issues as important components of NAMMCO’s credibility as a resource management organization. Therefore, it urges Member Countries to apply the required level of precaution and recommends:</p>	<p>Is the precautionary principle sufficiently applied in the provision of management advice?</p>	<p>MCs / SC</p>
<p>(1) populations with observed declining trends and subject to hunting (e.g. hooded seals in Greenland Sea, grey and harbour seals in Iceland, ringed seals in Svalbard, grey seals in Trøndelag-Nordland, fin whales, humpback whales and white-beaked dolphins in West Greenland, minke in Icelandic coastal waters), as well as a number of poorly known stocks that are affected by direct and indirect takes (e.g. bearded seals in West and East Greenland, bearded seals in Svalbard, killer whales in West and East Greenland, possibly white-sided dolphins in Faroe Islands, Harbour porpoise in Norwegian waters) are given the proper attention;</p>	<p>SC to prepare/review an overview of the stock status (AE, trends, removals, etc), then to MCs to prioritise the effort in managing the different stocks.</p>	<p>SC (+Sec), MCs // Parties</p>
<p>(2) all these cases be fully reconsidered as a matter of priority to (a) confirm that hunts are sustainable, (b) solve all inconsistencies and (c) produce and make publicly available, in a simplified manner, all necessary data that can confirm or otherwise that hunts do not harm these stocks;</p>	<p>However, management decisions remain up to the Parties</p>	
<p>(3) the Council work with other relevant international and national authorities to develop a plan to help the Scientific Committee implement the research recommendations from the GROM working group on ‘abundance estimates’, ‘stock identity’, and ‘movement and distribution’ assigning high priority and funding to this work;</p>	<p>Up to parties to implement recommendations. SC usual follow up</p>	<p>GL, NO, (CA) SC</p>
<p>(4) the Council implements PRP18-RC28 (section 2.2.5.3) on developing clear and transparent working methods on interactions between Committee’s;</p>	<p>Better communication needed: •SC to better explain the</p>	<p>MCs, SC</p>

	basis for its advice. •MCs to explain more clearly their reasoning when not supporting advice from the SC.	
(5) management actions be timely implemented by Member Countries as they are based on the best scientific advice available at the time that the recommendation is made;	Noted	Parties
NAMMCO Scientific Committee establish, with the support of the Secretariat, a systematic procedure to assess species and stocks . In order not to duplicate efforts and streamline existing approaches, this procedure should also codify the way NAMMCO Scientific Committee interacts with other bodies, such as the Scientific Committee of the IWC, various working groups of ICES and relevant Canadian research institutes and departments. This includes the adoption by the Council of a work plan to tackle the most urgent cases in terms of data collection and assessments, also taking into account the ageing of available abundance estimates. The Panel notes the positive improvement made at the last meeting of the Management Committees and the Council (2018) with the introduction of the list of <i>“Recent proposals for Conservation and Management and research recommendations”</i> as a tool to assess progress made on recommended conservation and management measures.	An overview of SC assessment procedures is in progress. Defining coordination with other organisations. Prioritisation of assessment efforts.	SC, MCs, CNL
[PRP18- RC10] The Panel also has not found that NAMMCO has made any explicit efforts to take account of the harmful impacts of others anthropogenic activities, such as, for example, underwater noise and whale and seal watching, on marine mammal stocks and ecosystems and recommends that the Scientific Committee address this issue as appropriate.	A formal procedure exists in SC, item on all WG agendas [SC does not generate research]	
[PRP18-RC22] The Panel concurs with the views expressed by 20 of the 24 survey respondents that NAMMCO’s sharing of data related to marine mammal hunts and its use in assessment is at least “good”. It also notes that proper planning of marine mammal species assessments is an efficient way to involve Member Countries in data sharing and exchange.	Noted. Secretariat prepared an overview plan	Sec
[PRP18-RC24] Given limited budgets, the Panel recommends that the Council, on a regular basis, review priorities given to addressing identified gaps in data collection.	Relates to prioritisation of management efforts – cf RC5 (1,2)	MCs
[PRP18-RC12] The Panel recommends that the NAMMCO Council encourage Member Countries to agree to a standard format for reporting and to implement better reporting of Struck & Lost data for inclusion in National Progress Reports and a future NAMMCO Catch database or in the current NAMMCO data spreadsheet.	Relates to data quality and quality of data collection and storage in all sectors. Strong attention to be given and action needed.	MCs, SC, CHM, BYCELS // Parties
[PRP18-RC13] The Panel believes that NAMMCO is an important mechanism for improving the collection of data and data sharing in the region. It recommends that the Secretariat and the Chairs of relevant Committees work with other relevant IGOs (particularly the IWC) to avoid overlaps in deadlines and facilitate the data submission process (e.g. using similar systems).		

<p>[PRP18-RC18] With regard to Struck & Lost (S&L) rates, the Panel notes that data is only available for approximately 1/3 of the marine mammal hunts conducted in the waters of NAMMCO member countries and agrees with the suggestion from the Scientific Committee that given the difficulty of obtaining such data, efforts should focus on those cases where more reliable struck and lost data are a priority for improving assessments that would make the most significant difference in terms of quota allocation. The Panel also notes the significant work done on this issue by the Committee on Hunting Methods including the preparation and distribution of a detailed document on this subject. However, the Panel expresses concern about the lack of an agreed standardised method and format to report struck and lost data and, as with the recommendations concerning bycatch and strandings above (PRP18-RC12 and PRP18-RC17), recommends that NAMMCO agrees, as soon as possible, to a standardised method and format to report struck and lost data.</p> <p>Because of the loss to the hunter when an animal is lost, in addition to issues of animal welfare, the Panel recommends that efforts to reduce S&L and to get reliable and accurate data on struck and lost data be continued.</p>	<p>It is also organisational question.</p> <p>Reliable database necessary – priority action, with guidelines on data quality and sharing process.</p> <p>SC, CHM, BYCELS to provide input to establish and maintain database – with SC help.</p>	
<p>[PRP18-RC20] Measures of hunting effort related to catches of some species could be obtained relatively easily from analyses of hunting licenses issued, logbooks and inspection and observation reports and interviews with hunters. The Panel recommends that ship strikes [and strandings] be reported more consistently.</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC23] The Panel recommends that hunting data gathered by NAMMCO continue to be shared among NAMMCO member countries as well as with relevant scientists from non-member countries and IGOs, as appropriate. To this end, the Panel also recommends the establishment of a proper searchable ‘NAMMCO catch database’ and development of the necessary data sharing procedures and confidentiality agreements. The Panel stresses the importance that the official ‘NAMMCO catch database’ contains the same data used by Member Countries for their assessment. Central databases are key for proper management of wild marine resources, particularly those on mortality data and abundance and distribution. Therefore, the Panel believes that NAMMCO should also consider any future NAMMCO catch database include all human-induced mortality (i.e., bycatch and ship strikes) and a sighting database. NAMMCO could explore the possibility to carry out these efforts in cooperation with other international organizations that are already managing similar databases (e.g. ICES, IWC, etc.).</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC25] ... In particular, the Panel suggests that the use of a standard template, respects for deadlines, data collection, transmission to central administration, transmission of data from central administration to NAMMCO Secretariat, and creation and maintenance of appropriate NAMMCO databases, be considered.</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC87] The Panel is of the view that a centralized database on stock assessments (abundance & removal data) and for the evaluation of trends in hunters’ safety and hunting efficiency, is fundamental to providing repeatability and consistency in analyses and recommends that NAMMCO develops such a database as soon as possible.</p> <p>It also recommends development of a procedure that specifies, a.o.t., the level of accessibility to data within and outside NAMMCO, the data quality control process, and deadlines for data submission, among other things.</p>		

<p>[PRP18-RC26] The Panel notes that the scientific production of NAMMCO has positively evolved throughout NAMMCO's history. The Panel notes that the advice received by the NAMMCO Council, the Management Committees and Member Countries from the Scientific Committee is of good scientific quality. The Panel notes that NAMMCO Member Countries have approved an increase in the number of national experts attending the Scientific Committee meetings from three to a maximum of six national delegates. However, it also notes that currently none of the Member Countries send six scientists (Faroes: one; Greenland: five; Iceland: four; Norway: five). Given the increased number of requests for advice from the Council, the Panel recommends Parties take advantage of the new rule of a possible maximum of 6 members to the greatest extent possible. The Panel also suggests that, given the limited availability of experts on assessments of the sustainability of quotas, budgetary considerations, and the requirement in the NAMMCO Agreement that the Scientific Committee "<i>utilize, to the extent possible, existing scientific information</i>", NAMMCO investigate a more structured cooperation with the IWC Scientific Committee and a more robust use of external expertise.</p>	<p>Part 1 to CNL Part 2 to SC for comment on status and possible improvement if needed</p>	<p>CNL, SC</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC28] The Panel is concerned about the process for developing and recommending conservation and management advice.</p> <p>As currently implemented, it can result in actions by NAMMCO that can be construed as a rejection of the best available scientific advice as developed by the Scientific Committee. In addition, a lack of clarity in the way that the process works appears to have created tension between participants in certain NAMMCO bodies. The series of events described above has caused some to raise questions about the roles and responsibilities of the various components of the Commission including the Council, the Management Committees and the Scientific Committees. These questions include whether the MCC was acting beyond its authority by, for example, seeking to substitute its judgment for the judgment of the Scientific Committee concerning the validity of the criteria to be used to make a scientific determination about how to define the management units. Questions have also been raised about whether recommendations made by NAMMCO to its members about the conservation and management of marine mammals could be made solely to protect hunting interests without regards to impacts on the sustainability of a stock. These kinds of perceptions can damage the credibility of the Commission.</p> <p>The Panel recommends that NAMMCO take steps to eliminate the chances that they will occur.</p>	<p>Relates to better communication and a more thorough explanations of advice and recommendations - cf RC5(1,2). Refers to SC and MCs for their views on existing RoPs and possible improvements and to MCs to define management objectives.</p>	<p>MCs, SC</p>

<p>[PRP18-RC29] The Panel also recommends that the Council develop rules of procedure that define the relationship between the Management Committees and the Scientific Committees and how they will interact.</p> <p>These rules should confirm the particular areas of responsibility of the Management Committees and the Scientific Committees. They should also acknowledge the overlap in their work. These rules should address the Management Committees' use of the advice of the Scientific Committee in the development of conservation and management measures for NAMMCO members.</p> <p>The Panel believes that it would be better for NAMMCO if it avoids circumstances under which a Management Committee decides that it will not recommend the advice provided by the Scientific Committee to the relevant member(s) in a conservation and management measure. In the unusual circumstance in which a Management Committee does not adopt the advice of the Scientific Committee, the Management Committee should explain the reasons why clearly and transparently. The Panel concludes that the Scientific Committee would be better able to provide advice that considers the management objectives that are important to NAMMCO and its members, if the Management Committees would identify relevant management objectives when formulating recommendations concerning scientific research. Providing this information would help to eliminate situations in which the Scientific Committee provides advice that does not take into account relevant factors.</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC30] Panel also recommends that the Management Committees modify the language used to describe their response to the advice of the Scientific Committee. Currently, the Management Committees "<i>endorse</i>" or choose to "<i>not endorse</i>" Scientific Committee advice. This can be viewed as suggesting that the Management Committee has evaluated and made a decision about the quality of the information provided. The Panel suggests that instead the Management Committees should consider using "<i>supporting</i>" or "<i>noted, but not supporting</i>".</p>	Cf. roles of committees	MCs
<p>[PRP18-RC31] The Panel strongly recommends that NAMMCO initiate work to determine how it can better support its members in using this tool [the development of stock-specific reference points and associated management actions that will be automatically taken if a reference point is exceeded] in the management of marine mammal resources. Several of the regional fisheries bodies have had extensive consultations regarding the application of the precautionary approach, and some have developed processes for its implementation.</p> <p>As NAMMCO is unique, the Panel recognizes that it needs to establish its own process for contributing to the implementation of the precautionary approach by its Members. Nevertheless, the Panel believes that it would be useful to have the development of that process be informed by the experiences of other regional fisheries bodies. NAMMCO should also rely upon the lessons of the WGHARP in developing its framework approach for the management of harp and hooded seals.</p>	Relates to generalize defining stocks' specific reference points and associated management actions, as used for a few stocks, to support a more precautionary approach – cf RC5(6)	SC
<p>[PRP18-RC35] The Panel recommends that NAMMCO develop guidance for Members on how to come to an agreement on the management of shared stocks, including the allocation of allowable catch.</p>	Not in the remit of NAMMCO, bilateral issue.	

<p>[PRP18-RC36] The Panel finds that for most stocks of marine mammals that are hunted by both a NAMMCO Member and NAMMCO non-Member, current levels of removal are sustainable which suggests that the relevant management measures are consistent or compatible. However, the Panel is concerned that the Northeast Canada/Baffin Bay/West Greenland stock of ringed seals has not been assessed since 1996 and has significant removals. The Panel notes that there is no agreed venue, such as the JCNB for Greenland and Canada to collaborate on managing this stock. The Panel also notes that the Scientific Committee is tentatively planning to convene a ringed seal working group in 2020 or 2021.</p> <p>The Panel urges the Scientific Committee to hold the ringed seal working group as soon as possible but, in any case, no later than 2021 so that work on an assessment of this stock may be completed as quickly as possible.</p> <p>The Panel also urges NAMMCO to identify an appropriate forum for Greenland and Canada to engage in the management of the shared stock of ringed seal [and walrus and bearded seal].</p>	<p>Ringed and bearded seal WG planned in 2021 should not be postponed.</p> <p>Important concerns on sustainability of hunts.</p> <p>NAMMCO could provide forum for GL/CA cooperation, good relation to CA always sought.</p>	<p>CNL, SC</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC39] The Panel finds that NAMMCO has done a significant amount of work on minimizing harmful hunting activities particularly concerning reducing the number of animals that are Struck & Lost and reducing the time to death of hunted animals. The Panel recommends that NAMMCO, through the CHM and other bodies, to continue this work and to try to identify other harmful hunting activities that can be mitigated.</p>	<p>Noted CHM continues good work</p>	<p>CHM</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC41] The Panel was unable to find any evidence that NAMMCO has adopted a rebuilding plan for any of the stocks that the Scientific Committee has found to be depleted.</p>	<p>No plan per se, but some stocks are rebuilding (narwhal, beluga, walrus).</p>	<p>Seek comments from MCs, SC</p>
<p>AREA 2 – HUNTING ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>PRWG comments</p>	<p>Referred to:</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC42] The Panel is of the view that NAMMCO has given a high priority and expended considerable human and financial resources to its work on the safety, efficiency and animal welfare issues in all hunting activities under its purview and that outputs from Committee on Hunting Methods, including those from the workshops and Expert Group Meetings, have been substantial. The Panel is of the view that the work of the Committee on Hunting Methods together with the approval of its recommendations by the Council and implementation of these recommendations by member countries is one of the key elements that have made NAMMCO a credible organization.</p> <p>The Panel recommends that the work of the Committee on Hunting Methods should continue as new information related to weaponry and hunting methods becomes available and, as the Council deems appropriate in relation to other NAMMCO priorities.</p>	<p>Noted (on-going)</p>	<p>CHM</p>

<p>[PRP18-RC50] Based upon the information provided, the Panel concludes that NAMMCO has identified increasing IDR and minimizing TTD as goals.</p> <p>The Panel also concludes that while members have made significant improvements in IDR/TTD in many of the harpoon grenade whale hunts, there are still differences, some of which are significant, among the rates for these hunts and there is still room for improvement. To improve performance on these metrics, NAMMCO needs to continue its efforts to understand the reasons for the different rates in different hunts.</p>	<p>Noted - In progress. One of the issues which will be dealt by the upcoming CHM Expert Group.</p>	<p>CHM</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC52] The information reviewed by the Panel also demonstrates that NAMMCO has focused on gaining an understanding the number of animals that are Struck & Lost in various hunts and the cause of these events to reduce the level of Struck & Lost animals. For large whales, the data demonstrate that the number of animals Struck & Lost is low and that NAMMCO members have made progress in reducing those numbers. However, for small cetaceans, it is not possible to assess whether efforts to reduce the number of animals that have been struck and lost have, to date, had any impact. The requisite data is not available, or its quality is not very high.</p> <p>The Panel recommends that the CHM and the Scientific Committee continue to work to define better methods for collecting data from all hunts on the occurrence of Struck & Lost events and the circumstances surrounding those events. These efforts should continue to respond to the recommendations from the various workshop and expert group meetings. This Information is useful for providing better assessments, with reduced levels of uncertainty, and developing hunting guidance that reduces these occurrences.</p>	<p>Seek comments from CHM</p>	<p>CHM</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC53] The Panel encourages the CHM to continue its practice of working with people representing a wide range of interests, including hunters, on these issues.</p>	<p>Noted. Good work to be continued</p>	<p>CHM</p>
<p>AREA 3 – COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT</p>	<p>PRWG comments</p>	<p>Referred to:</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC54] NAMMCO and its members have established a two-part system for monitoring compliance with national laws... The other part is the "NAMMCO Observation Scheme". The Panel is concerned that the Observation Scheme does not provide benefits that are commensurate with its costs. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the Council use the ongoing review of the NAMMCO Observation Scheme as a catalyst for reform.</p> <p>The Panel believes that the first step in a reform effort should be to clearly define, in NAMMCO's overall Strategic Plan, NAMMCO's objectives for observing the hunts of marine mammals in NAMMCO's area. The Scheme currently establishes that its purpose "<i>is to provide a mechanism for NAMMCO to monitor whether decisions made by the Commission are respected.</i>" This purpose seems somewhat out of step with the NAMMCO Agreement as the Commission makes recommendations that are implemented at the discretion of the individual members. In establishing the objectives of the Observation Scheme, the Panel urges the Council to consider the costs of and</p>	<p>Ongoing review of the Observation Scheme.</p> <p>New part B has been adopted by CNL27, part A in review by CIO</p> <p>Now twofold: a) observation of hunting, 2) implementation of advice by parties.</p>	<p>CIO, CNL</p>

<p>benefits from the current scheme. To date, only two infractions have been reported in the 20 years that the Scheme has been in operation. It seems improbable that this accurately reflects the levels of compliance in NAMMCO's hunts. The cost of this effort has been 1.66 million NOK. The Panel doubts that the amount of hunting activity observed, along with the fact that hunters have advanced notice that particular hunts are being observed, allows for NAMMCO to obtain an accurate picture of how the hunt for a specific species in a particular manner occurs over time. The Panel recognizes that there may be benefits to NAMMCO that result from the fact that it monitors hunting activities. The Panel believes that those benefits quickly diminish and can become a liability if the mechanism for monitoring hunts is viewed as not providing an accurate portrayal of the hunts. If the Council determines that one of the objectives of the scheme is to obtain an accurate understanding of the level of compliance with national laws implementing NAMMCO recommendations, the Panel believes that significantly more resources will need to be devoted to the operation of the Observations Scheme.</p> <p>Given the many significant demands on the limited resources of the Commission, the Council may consider taking an alternative approach to compliance monitoring such as conducting regular audits of the inspection programs of each of the members and providing support for improving the functioning of those programs where appropriate.</p> <p>Finally, the Panel recommends that if the Commission is to continue to operate the Observation Scheme the Council explore ways of making the work done under the Observation Scheme more transparent. Currently, the only information on the NAMMCO website about the outcomes of the work under the scheme is contained in the reports of the CIO meetings. If the Council decides that continuing the operation of the Observation scheme is in the strategic interests of the Commission, it should also consider how to make the results of that work more easily accessible to stakeholders.</p>	<p>Prioritisation of observation activities could be assigned in relation to hunting levels</p> <p>Seek input from CIO on priorities, effort to reach objective and alternative methods.</p> <p>.</p> <p>CIO to increase its visibility and transparency on the website</p>	
<p>AREA 4 – DECISION-MAKING</p>	<p>PRWG comments</p>	<p>Referred to:</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC55] ... The Panel believes that NAMMCO could build upon work already begun [in involving resource users in NAMMCO decision-making] to make additional progress that would benefit NAMMCO and its work.</p> <p>The Panel encourages NAMMCO to consider, in the process of developing a Strategic Plan, how it might appropriately expand the role of user knowledge in its work.</p>	<p>Noted Organisation and Parties continue to give attention. Maybe more visibility needed.</p>	<p>CNL, website</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC58] The Panel notes that throughout the conduct of its work it heard comments about language barriers created by the fact that NAMMCO works in English and recommends that the Commission consider whether there are viable ways to reduce or remove this barrier, including through the use of technology.</p>	<p>N/A (no further action) Translation services up to Parties, has never been raised as a problem.</p>	<p>es</p>

AREA 5 – INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	PRWG comments	Referred to:
<p>[PRP18-RC60] The Panel is of the view that much, if not all this material does not require access protection and recommends that this matter be reviewed with a view to increasing transparency. As part of this review the Council may wish to consider aligning its policy related to access protection to its documents with the Norwegian standard as to what would and would not be provided in response to a request under its “Freedom of Information Act”.</p> <p>The Panel recommends that the results of such a review be made public.</p>	<p>Noted – on-going</p> <p>No need for any review.</p> <p>Attention given in last years and most documents accessible on website.</p> <p>Translation up to Parties.</p>	
<p>[PRP18-RC61] The Panel recommends that these issues be specifically addressed as part of the review recommended in the previous paragraph. A need for greater transparency was also addressed in other sections.</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC62] Given the above comments, the Panel considers that NAMMCO’s transparency requires improvements; this could include a translation of key documents in English (e.g., relevant legislation), which should be available on the website.</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC65] NAMMCO should aim to persuade [to join NAMMCO] those countries that are conducting hunts in the North Atlantic (i.e., Canada and St Vincent and the Grenadines) and the Russian Federation, which hunts in the adjacent Arctic region and that share some stocks (e.g. bearded, harp and ringed seals, beluga, etc.).</p>	<p>Issue long existed since inception. Standing invitation to CA and RU. Ref to NAMMCO Agreement Art. 4.2.f.</p>	
<p>[PRP18-RC68] The Panel recommends that such efforts [to cooperate with other relevant international organizations] be continued and regularly reviewed on an individual basis to determine whether they contribute to NAMMCO’s efforts to meet its strategic goals.</p> <p>The Panel recommends that NAMMCO considers entering into formal arrangements on relevant scientific and technical matters. Cooperation with other relevant IOs should also be part of the NAMMCO Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>NAMMCO has established formal relationship with many organisations. It is presently considering/is in the process of strengthening some of these relationships.</p>	<p>CNL</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC69] As with activities of the Scientific Committee, the Panel recommends that postponement or reductions of efforts to cooperate with other relevant organizations should not be used as an ongoing solution to budget shortfalls.</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC93] The Panel encourages NAMMCO to enter into formal agreements with relevant IGOs, aimed at achieving common scientific, conservation and management goals.</p>		

<p>[PRP18-RC94] The Panel recommends that, at a minimum, cooperation and collaboration with other organizations involved with the conservation of marine mammals and Arctic issues be maintained at current levels and, if budget decisions allow and if consistent with any Strategic Plan, efforts to increase cooperation and collaboration be pursued.</p>	<p>Ref to RC69: very specific and special situation in 2018.</p>	
<p>AREA 6 – FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES</p>	<p>PRWG comments</p>	<p>Referred to:</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC72] With regard to the cuts that were made in all budget items for 2018 and 2019, the Panel notes that one reason for these cuts was that funding was required for relocation and hiring of the Scientific Secretary. The Panel is of the view that a separate fund should have been previously established to cover such inevitable costs and that funding for such costs should not come from cuts to regular program components.</p>	<p>N/A - NAMMCO has a contingency fund and plans for rebuilding it. Two concurring contingencies in 2018.</p>	
<p>[PRP18-RC74] With respect to the general reserves, the Panel agrees that consideration should be given to how the general reserves may, as soon as possible, be rebuilt to the level agreed.</p>	<p>N/A Rebuilding already in financial plan.</p>	
<p>[PRP18-RC76] The Panel has no information to evaluate the efficiency with which the Secretariat manages these additional/external funds but recommends rules or guidelines for the receipt of such funds be developed for managing these types of resources.</p>	<p>Procedural rules for Secretariat for managing and using funding should be defined</p>	<p>FAC</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC79] The Panel notes that the quality of the organization of NAMMCO meetings is adequate. It also notes that the current schedule poses some difficulties, especially in regard to the various Scientific Committee working groups and recommends that the Secretariat with the Scientific Committee Chair and all conveners of all working groups examine alternative options (e.g. having the SC’s meeting in April/May and the Council’s in November), with a goal of giving more time to the Scientific Committee and its working groups to respond to Council’s requests.</p>	<p>Already in discussion. Sec should prepare an historical perspective.</p>	<p>SC, FAC, Sec</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC73] The Panel also notes that the Council has agreed that communications and outreach activities should be a priority and recommends that staffing be adjusted to reflect these priorities or others identified in the Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>Ongoing discussion. A balance between ambitions needs to be assured</p>	
<p>[PRP18-RC77] The Panel recommends that the relative proportions of budget allocations for these activities [staff related costs, SC, CO] should be reviewed.</p>	<p>Relates to discussion on priorities & strategy (item</p>	<p>Discussion on priorities, FAC</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC83] The Panel heard a number of other comments and suggestions concerning the need for restructuring the Secretariat and suggests that these could more appropriately be addressed by the Finance and Administration Committee and the Council or a SWOT analysis, if one is to be carried out for the Secretariat. A SWOT analysis of the Secretariat should also include a review of the Staff Rules for the Secretariat.</p>	<p>Staffing discussion must be taken after</p>	

<p>[PRP18-RC85] The Panel also recommends that an outside consultant be hired to examine and provide advice relative to the level of staff salaries and benefits, including in comparison to other IGOs, and other related issues.</p>	<p>assignments to the Secretariat are decided.</p>	
<p>[PRP18-RC84] The Panel also suggests that given the Council’s appropriation of a high priority to using the website for communications and outreach activities, a review be undertaken to determine if the current outsourcing of work related to the NAMMCO website is the best and most cost effective way of achieving this.</p>	<p>FAC has been tasked by CNL27 of carrying a review of pension schemes.</p>	
<p>[PRP18-RC82] Given that communications and outreach receive the largest allocation of NAMMCO’s program elements and the fact that communications and outreach activities are an essential component of establishing NAMMCO’s credibility, NAMMCO should consider hiring someone with extensive experience and expertise in communications.</p>		
<p>AREA 7 – OUTREACH</p>	<p>PRWG comments</p>	<p>Referred to:</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC7] In preparing this review, the Panel found that some of the information about species and stocks that is included on the NAMMCO official website, is incorrect. The Panel was informed that the Scientific Committee has agreed to proof-read all scientific and technical information that is on the website. However, there is no formal procedure to carry out such an important task. Therefore, the Panel recommends that NAMMCO established a formal procedure to review and update the NAMMCO website regularly. The Panel suggests that all Committees, together with the Secretariat, periodically review and endorse their relevant sections, including all figures and tables.</p> <p>In particular, the Panel notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That trends of abundance of marine mammal populations and their conservation status are presented on the website in an inconsistent manner. This is true between and within species, with inconsistencies on: (a) how the same information on different species is presented and (b) what is presented for the various populations within a species, including information on abundance estimates and trends. The Panel recommends that an editorial effort is made to guarantee a consistent approach in presenting information on trends of distribution and abundance for all species and their populations. - That the color-coding of the assessments’ tables presented online and the various geographic areas there listed are potentially confusing. In terms of the definition of colour categories in the stock assessments tables, the Panel believes that categories “light blue” and “orange” need clarification. Both categories, are defined using the wording “<i>no assessment, but substantial removals ...</i>”. This wording leaves the reader believing that some quantitative assessment to establish reference points and evaluations of whether those removals are having an effect on populations has been made. However, all this would entail a proper assessment of the population, which is negated by these definitions themselves. The wording “<i>substantial removals</i>” here is, therefore, misleading and the Panel 	<p>The website is the most important visibility and outreach tool of NAMMCO. Its content should be correct and updated. The Committees should guarantee the quality of its content. The review of the content should be one of their recurrent tasks.</p>	<p>CNL, FAC, SC, CHM, CIO, BYCELS, Sec</p>

<p>recommends changing it and clarifying whether these are quantitative or qualitative categories and what type of data was used to define the level of removals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That, in terms of names of geographical areas, it would be beneficial to establish an official nomenclature to avoid confusion and suggests that the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat should work together to address this issue. - That tables on stocks, would benefit from some clarity when presenting assessment made solely by NAMMCO, assessments made in collaboration with other organizations (e.g., International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) working groups, IWC, JCNB, etc.) and assessments made only by other organizations. The Panel notes that it would be very useful to also report on the NAMMCO website assessments made entirely by others, if then adopted or used by the NAMMCO Scientific Committee to provide advice to the Council; however, some note would be required to explain the process. - Some inconsistency in the treatment of some known stocks (identified by the Panel in purple in Table 1, which are coded as “light blue” stocks or even missing from the website tables). In particular - given the existing knowledge in relation to direct and indirect takes of killer whales and white-beaked dolphins in the North Atlantic, harbour porpoises in Greenland and Norway and harbour and grey seals in Greenland – the Panel recommends that these stocks be reconsidered and, if necessary, classified as ‘orange’ (<i>‘no assessment but substantial removals’</i>). - Other issues with the information on marine mammal species on the website, including several incorrect references to published reports in relation to the most recent assessments and missing species and populations (i.e., the Greenlandic grey seal, which is a new species since 2009, and the Greenlandic stock of the harbour seal). 	<p>FAC should established a review procedure.</p> <p>CNL for general views, SC for stock status and specific assessment reports.</p> <p>BYCELS, CIO and CHM for their related part, with CIO developing part on Observation.</p>	
<p>[PRP18-RC88] The Panel urges the Commission to integrate the Communication and outreach strategy into a broader overall strategy for NAMMCO.</p>	<p>Cf. Prioritization discussion</p>	<p>Discussion on priorities</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC89] The Panel also recommends continuing the practice of adopting shorter term (no more than two year) and more detailed “Communications and Outreach Plans” for implementing the strategy.</p> <p>It also recommends that the Commission adopt and implement quantifiable measures of the effectiveness of the Plan and of various tools that are used to implement the Plan including the website, the Facebook page and the Twitter feed. These measures should go beyond simply noting the number of hits. Furthermore, the Panels recommends that the Council ensure that the budget for implementation of the Communications and Outreach Plans is sufficient to meet the goals therein.</p>	<p>Fundamental discussion: what is communication for an IGO.</p> <p>Website is of high priority</p>	<p>Discussion on priorities</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC91] The Panel considers that the review of the Commission’s credibility should include an assessment of how the products of the Commission are received, including by members, peers, stakeholders, and the academic community. This includes considering if the work is valued, relied upon or sought. NAMMCO’s credibility should also be considered throughout the full range of its mandate including outputs from the Scientific Committee, its Committee on Hunting methods and recommended regulatory measures with respect to sustainable management of marine mammals across the North Atlantic.</p>	<p>Noted, N/A</p> <p>Interesting but too much for IGO like NAMMCO.</p>	

Recommendations to Parties

PARTIES	PRWG comments	Referred to:
<p>[PRP18-RC5] ...The Panel views these issues as important components of NAMMCO’s credibility as a resource management organization. Therefore, it urges Member Countries to apply the required level of precaution and recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - populations with observed declining trends and subject to hunting (e.g. hooded seals in Greenland Sea, grey and harbour seals in Iceland, ringed seals in Svalbard, grey seals in Trøndelag-Nordland, fin whales, humpback whales and white-beaked dolphins in West Greenland, minke in Icelandic coastal waters), as well as a number of poorly known stocks that are affected by direct and indirect takes (e.g. bearded seals in West and East Greenland, bearded seals in Svalbard, killer whales in West and East Greenland, possibly white-sided dolphins in Faroe Islands, Harbour porpoise in Norwegian waters) are given the proper attention. • - management actions be timely implemented by Member Countries as they are based on the best scientific advice available at the time that the recommendation is made. 	<p>[Addressed under Area 1] Needs advice from MCs, which must be precautionary. Then referred to Parties’ management decision</p>	<p>MCs // Parties</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC9] It recommends that accurate estimates of bycatch are provided in a timely manner for the assessment of all populations of marine mammals subject to hunts. The Panel also strongly encourages all NAMMCO Member Countries to maintain or proceed with the implementation of national bycatch monitoring systems based on independent observers as appropriate. The Panel also strongly encourages Greenland “to investigate the degree to which bycatch is reported as catch”.</p>	<p>NAMMCO needs good data quality, SC shall provide advice on reliable by-catch data collection and monitoring system. Clarity on GL reporting</p>	<p>SC, JMC // Parties</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC19] Bycatch rates are unknown for most fisheries in all Countries. Therefore, the Panel recommends that monitoring of bycatch with the use of inspectors [and observers] and electronic logbooks be continued and that where bycatch numbers are high, efforts to reduce bycatch also be continued.</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC12] The Panel recommends that the NAMMCO Council encourage Member Countries to agree to a standard format for reporting and to implement better reporting of Struck & Lost data for inclusion in National Progress Reports and a future NAMMCO Catch database or in the current NAMMCO data spreadsheet.</p>	<p>NAMMCO needs good data quality. Seek advice from SC and CHM on how to proceed for generating reliable catch & S&L data. Standardised data reporting.</p>	<p>SC, CHM, // Parties</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC15] In this regard, the Panel notes that a “quality review” of the catch data provided by Greenlandic hunters is now performed yearly. The Panel recommends that to the extent practicable, this “quality review” of catch data provided by Greenlandic hunters be continued and improved.</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC18] The Panel agrees with the suggestion from the SC that given the difficulty of obtaining such data, efforts should focus on those cases where more reliable S&L data are a priority for improving assessments that would make the most significant difference in terms of quota allocation.</p>		

<p>Because of the loss to the hunters when an animal is lost, in addition to issues of animal welfare, the Panel recommends that efforts to reduce Struck & Lost and to get reliable and accurate data on struck and lost data be continued.</p> <p>However, the Panel expresses concern about the lack of an agreed standardised method and format to report S&L data and, as with the recommendations concerning bycatch and strandings, recommends that NAMMCO agrees, as soon as possible, to a standardised method and format to report S&L data.</p>	<p>Cf. database.</p>	
<p>[PRP18-RC16] The Panel also recommends that the feasibility of implementing an electronic system for reporting catches of quota species (as has been done for non-quota species) be examined.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>GL</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC17] Currently data on bycatch and strandings are inconsistently reported in the NPRs and NAMMCO data spreadsheet to various Committees, Working Groups. The Panel recommends that these data be reported in a consistent manner.</p>	<p>Standardised data reporting. Cf. database.</p>	<p>JMC // Parties</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC20] The Panel notes the low number of strandings reported and the absence of information on hunting effort and ship strikes in the NAMMCO data spreadsheet. Measures of hunting effort related to catches of some species could be obtained relatively easily from analyses of hunting licenses issued, logbooks and inspection and observation reports and interviews with hunters. The Panel recommends that ship strikes be reported more consistently. [All]</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC21] Finally, with regard to the Greenlandic monitoring system of take, the Panel notes that increasing wildlife officers to collect appropriate data on takes does not seem impossible. The Panel recognises that such action would require commitments of funds for training new officers and maintaining their salaries. However, the Panel suggests that Greenland seriously considers this option as a medium or long-term solution, in the context of its priorities or related activities.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>GL</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC23] The Panel recommends that hunting data gathered by NAMMCO continue to be shared among NAMMCO member countries as well as with relevant scientists from non-member countries and IGOs, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Noted – on-going</p>	<p>Secr // All</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC24] It also recommends that Member Countries consider timely implementation of all relevant recommendations from the Council and the Management Committees [regarding gaps in data collection].</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>Parties</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC26] However, it also notes that currently none of the Member Countries send six scientists (Faroes: one; Greenland: five; Iceland: four; Norway: five). Given the increased number of requests for advice from the Council, the Panel recommends Parties take advantage of the new rule to the greatest extent possible.</p>	<p>Noted, partially addressed.</p>	<p>Parties</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC32] If a NAMMCO Member Country decides that it must choose not to implement or fully implement a recommendation, the Member Country should publicize that decision, including with a public notification to the Council that includes a detailed explanation of why the Member Country has chosen not to implement the measure and to detail what measures the member intends to take instead.</p> <p>The Member Country should also identify whether any substitute action is expected to have the same impact as the proposed measure.</p>	<p>Responses of MCs and Parties better explained. A process exists to follow up on recommendations provided by MCs</p>	<p>Parties</p>

<p>[PRP18-RC33] The Panel recommends that all NAMMCO members maintain robust practices for involving relevant stakeholders in the process of implementing NAMMCO advice. This will lead to better implementation of NAMMCO's recommendation and enhance NAMMCO's credibility.</p> <p>The Panel recommends, that Iceland find ways to engage resources users in the implementation of NAMMCO advice, as appropriate.</p> <p>The Panel notes that while some of the recommendations provided by NAMMCO may be purely based on science, many are not. Those would include many of the recommendations based on the work of the CHM. Even with respect to the implementation of recommendations based purely on science, choices will need to be made about how to implement and often information from stakeholders can usefully inform decision-making.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>Parties</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC37] The Panel also notes the work that has been accomplished by the JCNB and encourages Greenland and Canada to strengthen that cooperation and the swift adoption and implementation of management measures developed through that process.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>GL, CA</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC46] The Panel concludes that NAMMCO and its members have done a very good job of implementing the recommendations developed at the workshops and expert meetings organized by the CHM. While the Panel did not find evidence that all recommendations have been implemented, the Panel believes that such a result is to be expected. For one, NAMMCO members have limited resources and must prioritize the use of those resources based on their broader needs. Also, there can be competing policy goals that preclude the implementation of a particular recommendation. Finally, there are multiple ways in which these recommendations might be implemented.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>Parties</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC47] Under these circumstances, the Panel believes that it would be best for the NAMMCO members to be as transparent as possible about how they are responding to the various recommendations. This should include identifying the recommendations that are not being implemented and the reasons for not implementing them. The Secretariat has developed a spreadsheet that is helpful in understanding what has and has not been accomplished. However, the presentation of information in that spreadsheet could be more transparent. In cases where implementation of a recommendation is delayed or declined because of inadequate resources, particularly concerning the collection and analysis of data, the Panel encourages NAMMCO members to explore ways in which they can share resources and allow the work to be completed or to be completed more quickly. Increasing collaboration in this manner will ultimately benefit the sustainable management of NAMMCO resources. Also, transparency about how NAMMCO members intend to respond to recommendations will help to sustain the goodwill and credibility that NAMMCO has earned because of its work on hunting.</p>	<p>Clearer communication and transparency on the follow up of CHM recommendations are needed</p>	<p>Parties</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC49] The Panel recommends that relevant legislation and regulations be updated consistent with any new advice from the Committee on Hunting Methods.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>Parties</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC50] To improve performance on these metrics [IDR/TTD], NAMMCO needs to continue its efforts to understand the reasons for the different rates in different hunts. Improved data collection and data analysis on IDR/TTD, particularly for several of the hunts in Greenland, is required.</p>	<p>WG believes that the issue will be partly addressed by upcoming EG?</p>	<p>Parties, GL</p>

<p>[PRP18-RC51] The Panel also shares the concerns that have been expressed by the CHM and others about the IDR/TTD and struck and lost rates for the rifle hunt of minke whales in Greenland. The evidence suggests that this hunt, by its nature, can never have "<i>an acceptable IDR/TTD rate</i>" and that its Struck & Lost rate will remain "<i>unacceptably high</i>". In addressing these limitations, Greenland must also take into account the apparently increased reliance on this hunt for the meat that it produces.</p>	<p>WG believes issue at least partly addressed by upcoming EG?</p>	<p>CHM // GL</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC62] Given the above comments, the Panel considers that NAMMCO's transparency requires improvements; this could include a translation of key documents in English (e.g., relevant legislation), which should be available on the website.</p>	<p>Need CHM comments, useful for CHM's work? Synopsis or more?</p>	<p>CHM</p>
<p>[PRP18-RC75] The Panel notes that with only a few exceptions, NAMMCO Member Countries allocate sufficient national resources to implement the recommendations made by NAMMCO and is of the view that this is an important element of NAMMCO's credibility (see criterion 7.1.2 for more comments on NAMMCO's credibility). NAMMCO members are encouraged to maintain this situation.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>Parties</p>

Recommendations for a next Performance Review

NEXT PERFORMANCE REVIEW	PRWG comments	Referred to:
<p>[PRP18-RC25] As a general suggestion pertaining to criteria 1.3.1-1.3.5, 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, the Panels also recommends that in future performance reviews, these detailed criteria are reconsidered to avoid duplication and, possibly, to better evaluate all steps of “data sharing” and its milestones, by assessing them separately.</p>	Noted	NAMMCO
<p>[PRP18-RC27] The Panel notes that Criteria 1.4.1 and 1.5.1 are potentially duplicates, given that NAMMCO Scientific Committee activities are finalized to provide scientific advice for the sustainable use of marine mammals. It, therefore, recommends merging these two criteria in future Performance Reviews.</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC34] The Panel notes that detailed criteria 1.6.2 (“Extent to which NAMMCO Parties involve resource users in deciding how to implement NAMMCO advice” in the area of “Adoption of Conservation and management measures”) and 2.4.2 on the “Extent to which NAMMCO Parties involve resource users in deciding how to implement NAMMCO advice in the area of “Adoption of advice on Hunting Methods and transcription in legal instruments” are essentially the same. Therefore, the Panel suggests that, in future Performance Review, these criteria being merged.</p>		
<p>[PRP18-RC67] Given the nature of the NAMMCO Agreement, the Panel also believes that, for future performance reviews, this specific criterion should be either revised or dropped. [5.2.3: Extent to which NAMMCO provides for action in accordance with international law and Agreement against non-NAMMCO Parties undermining the use of marine mammals, as well as measures to deter such activities.]</p>		