



MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

*26 March 2020
Online with Teams*

REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chair of Council, Kate Sanderson (Faroe Islands), welcomed the participants (Appendix 1) to this video meeting of the Heads of Delegations to the Council.

The Chair noted the exceptional situation currently faced by the members of NAMMCO, and therefore the organisation as a whole, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including travel and meeting restrictions in and between countries. These circumstances were also affecting the work of NAMMCO. The Heads of Delegations held a meeting on 13 March 2020 to decide on the best way ahead. They **agreed** then that the 28th Annual Meeting, as well any other NAMMCO meetings planned prior to the summer of 2020 that could not be held as video meetings would be postponed to a later date. The decisions necessary for the continuation of NAMMCO's work would be taken in a restricted Council meeting (Heads of Delegations, advisers, Secretariat, no observers), which would be convened after the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) had held a video meeting to conclude its intersessional work and finalise its advice to the Council. Less urgent decisions would be taken by correspondence in the time ahead. It was also **agreed** that activities under the NAMMCO Observation Scheme would be cancelled in 2020.

The Chair thanked the Secretariat for their efficient preparations for the (now postponed) 28th Annual Meeting, and subsequent video meetings, as well as for having been pro-active in their investigation of practical solutions.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda (COUNCIL/2020-01/01) was adopted with the addition of point 3.6 Other Issues (Appendix 2). Supporting documents to the meeting (also to be found in COUNCIL/2020-01/01) are listed in Appendix 3.

3. FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, Jessen (Greenland), presented the activities of the Committee since NAMMCO 27 (COUNCIL/2020-01/02).

The main administrative issues of relevance to Council included defining a deadline for the submission of documents prior to meetings of NAMMCO bodies, as reflected in proposed amendments to the relevant Rules of Procedures, reviewing a solution to the archiving issue at the Secretariat, and prioritising the work of the Secretariat in relation with the discussion on capacity and staffing related to workload. Financial issues included the review of the NAMMCO pension schemes, with priority given to finding an acceptable solution to resolve pension cost issues, reviewing the accounts for 2019, as well as reviewing itemisation of funds in the 2020 budget in relation to recent developments. The FAC also examined the budget implications of the changes proposed to the Committees' workplans in its preparation of the draft budget 2021. Other matters included answering the request of the Performance Review *ad hoc* Working Group.

Pension

Regarding the staff pension schemes, the FAC reviewed external expert advice to ensure a fair and efficient process and recommended that all staff members of the Secretariat should be covered by the same defined contribution scheme, which required the transfer of one staff member from a different scheme. This recommendation had been approved by the Council and steps had been taken to implement the change which took effect from 1 January 2020. The cost of the transfer would be accounted for in 2020.

Archiving System

FAC supported the use of SharePoint as an archiving system as recommended by the Secretariat IT councillor. This platform is an increasingly used Microsoft product, with some guarantee that it will continue being used and developed.

The FAC recommended to the Council to:

- Adopt the proposed amendments to the RoPs regarding the deadline for submission of documents to NAMMCO meetings.
- Schedule the annual meetings of both the Scientific Committee and the Commission in the first half of the year, with the Scientific Committee meeting a minimum of two months ahead of the Council meeting.
- Postpone the 28th Annual Meeting to spring 2021 and the next meeting of the Scientific Committee to two months before the Annual Meeting.
- Adopt the procedures recommended by the FAC to update the website and quality-check its content.
- Approve the 2019 audited accounts.
- Adopt the 2021 draft budget on a provisional basis.
- Task the Secretariat to draft a document defining NAMMCO financial rules for the consideration of the FAC, with the view to adoption by the Council.
- Be conscious of the implications of its proposed priorities; the focus should be on core issues for the organisation.
- Task the FAC to continue the discussion on the Secretariat staffing and priorities.

The FAC will hold a further meeting before the next annual meeting to address remaining issues, such as salary increments for Secretariat staff, funding of the Super Tag project, assessing 2020 expenses in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and possible consequences for the 2021 budget. This meeting should be held before the end of the financial year so that a final budget for 2021 can be adopted.

3.1 APPROVAL OF AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2019

The audited accounts for 2019 closed with a surplus of NOK 7,798, instead of the deficit of NOK 1,024,055 foreseen in the budget adopted at NAMMCO 27. This was largely due to the carrying over to 2020 the cost of transferring the pension scheme. The general reserve had increased to NOK 1,181,312 compared to the budgeted NOK 149,459.

The Council **approved** the 2019 audited accounts.

3.2 ADOPTION OF DRAFT BUDGET 2021

The Council **endorsed** the prioritisation and scheduling of activities proposed by the FAC (see agenda item 4) as reflected in the projected expenses of the different committees in 2020 and 2021.

After the COVID-19 related rescheduling of activities, the present budget for 2020 gives an anticipated deficit of NOK 361,160 as compared to the deficit of NOK 11,798 adopted at NAMMCO 27 (see also under 3.1). It gave a general reserve of NOK 820,152.

The draft budget 2021 gives an anticipated deficit of NOK 491,130, with a general reserve of NOK 329,022.

The Council noted a number of outstanding issues which would need to be taken into account in the final 2021 budget. Any additional re-scheduling of events in autumn 2020 may have further budgetary implications, the Inspection and Observation Committee had still to define a proposal for the scope of observation activities in 2021 (see under item 7.1.1) and staff salary increments would be discussed at the next FAC meeting later in the year.

The Council therefore **approved** the 2021 draft budget on a provisional basis. The Council will need to adopt a final budget later in the year, when outstanding issues have been reviewed by the FAC.

3.3 AMENDMENT OF RULES OF PROCEDURE

The FAC considered it desirable that all committees and their subsidiary bodies had the same deadlines for submitting document to NAMMCO meetings.

The FAC recommended that the following wording be included in the Rules of Procedures of the Council and proposed corresponding amendments to be inserted in the Rules of Procedures of other committees (NAMMCO/28/18).

As a general rule, all meeting documents to be discussed at any meeting of NAMMCO (Council and subsidiary bodies including Working Groups and Expert Groups) shall be made available through the Secretariat at the latest 15 days before the meeting. Information documents shall preferably become available by the end of the first day of the meeting.

The Council **adopted** the changes proposed to its Rules of Procedures and those of the different committees regarding the deadline for submission of meeting documents.

3.4 DEVELOPMENT OF FINANCIAL RULES

The Council **agreed** with the recommendation of the FAC that the established financial rules and practices of the organisation should be collated into a single document to serve as NAMMCO's financial rules. The Secretariat should draft such a document for the consideration of the FAC, with the view to its adoption by Council at its next meeting.

3.5 PROPOSED NEW TIMING OF SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND ANNUAL MEETINGS

The Council agreed with the recommendation of the FAC regarding changing the timing of the annual meetings of the Scientific Committee (SC) and the Commission. This change aimed at increasing work efficiency by shortening the time between a Council request for advice from the SC, the SC response, its consideration by the Management Committees, and their formulation of recommendations to member countries.

The Council **agreed** to schedule the annual meetings of the both Scientific Committee and the Commission (Council and Management Committees) in the first half of the year, with the SC meeting a minimum of two months prior to the Commission.

3.6 OTHER ISSUES

Website content quality review

The Council **endorsed** the way forward proposed by the CHM ([Report](#) 2019-03, page 8), CIO ([Report](#) 2019-03, page 6) and BYCELS ([Report](#) 2019, page 5) for reviewing the content quality of the NAMMCO website. For reviewing the species pages, the Council **endorsed** the procedure proposed by the FAC, which is slightly modified from that recommended by the Scientific Committee ([Report](#) 2019, page 14).

- The proposal 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 members and the perceived need for updated information.
- The Secretariat will update the website with new information following all SC related meetings. However, update on stock assessments shall be published only after being reviewed by the SC. The text of the update will be prepared by the Secretariat and reviewed by the Chair of the SC and the related WG Chairs before being published online.

4. AMENDMENTS TO SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE WORKPLAN FOR 2020-2022

The Council **endorsed** the following additions and clarifications related to the workplan of the Scientific Committee for 2020-2022. The amended workplan is contained in Table 1 below.

4.1 JOINT NAMMCO/ICES SEAL MODELLING WORKSHOP

At its [2019 annual meeting](#), the SC agreed with the ICES/NAMMCO/NAFO Working Group on harp and hooded seals, that it was important to revise and improve the seal population assessment models used for harp and hooded seals, as they were performing inadequately and needed to be further developed to provide a reliable basis for future assessments. The SC recommended that NAMMCO convene a workshop dedicated to this in cooperation with ICES. These developments may also prove useful for seal modelling and management in general and not necessarily be specific to harp and hooded seals.

4.2 WORKING GROUP ON NARWHAL IN EAST GREENLAND

At its [2019 annual meeting](#), the SC recognised that the issue of narwhal in East Greenland is a particularly complex and sensitive one and noted that there were a range of recommendations for research stemming from the *ad hoc* Working Group on Narwhal in East Greenland (NEGWG). On the basis of this, the SC recommended that a new meeting of the WG be scheduled for 2021.

4.3 RINGED AND BEARDED SEAL WORKING GROUPS

At its [2019 annual meeting](#), the SC noted that since ringed seals are a hunted species in NAMMCO countries, it was important that an assessment be conducted, even if there was no immediate cause for concern regarding the populations. However, there were ongoing studies on within Greenland and planned studies within Norway, and the SC proposed that the ringed seal WG be postponed. To allow for the ongoing research on bearded seals to be finalised and additional data to be made available, the SC proposed that the bearded seal WG also be delayed and take place in 2022 at the earliest.

Considering that both these species are hunted, a single review of the status of ringed seals had been conducted by NAMMCO 24 years ago in 1996 while the status of bearded seals had never been reviewed, and finally that both these working groups had been delayed for several years, the Council **agreed**, in support of a precautionary approach, that these working groups should not be further postponed.

The Council **requested** the Scientific Committee to convene these working groups in 2022 with the aim of conducting a thorough review of the existing data and to go ahead with the assessment of stocks for which it was possible. If the data required by a full assessment of (some of) the stocks were not available, the WGs and the SC should identify, and prioritise, which specific data essential to their assessments are still needed.

Table 1. Workplan for the Scientific Committee 2020-2022

2020	2021	2022
<p>Working Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By-catch • Coastal Seals • NAMMCO/JCNB JWG on Narwhal and Beluga • (Planning meeting for next NASS via correspondence) <p>Workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model development for assessment of seals, in collaboration with ICES • North Atlantic humpback whale tagging workshop/collaboration 	<p>Working Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot Whale • Narwhal in East Greenland (spring) • Abundance Estimates (for killer whales) 	<p>Working Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harbour Porpoise <i>Not to be postponed</i> • Ringed Seal • Bearded Seal

5. AMENDMENTS TO COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS WORKPLAN FOR 2020-2022

The 2020 Workplan of the Committee on Hunting Methods (CHM) adopted by NAMMCO 27 included an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on hunting efficiency of small cetaceans back to back with a workshop/EGM on hunting methods where the combined use of harpoon and rifle is not one weapon. The CHM proposed to postpone these meetings to 2021 and to combine both events into one with an increased budget from NOK 100,000 to NOK 238,500.

The EGM on small cetaceans should address members' responses to recommendations given by the 2011 EGM and review possible new information on hunting methods for small cetaceans, addressing all hunts for small cetaceans. A special focus would be given to the improvement of hunting methods where death is not immediate, e.g. types of hunts where the animal is harpooned and shot in separate sequences deploying two different types of weapons. In NAMMCO, this pertained to small cetaceans' hunts, the rifle hunt for minke whales as well as seal and walrus hunts.

The Council approved the following Workplan for the Committee on Hunting Methods:

2020

- Finalising instruction video on handling Whale grenade 99 – narratives in English
- Planning the Expert group meeting (EGM)

2021

- Expert Group Meeting:

Hunting efficiency of small cetaceans and hunting methods where the combined use of harpoon and rifle is not one weapon

6. RESCHEDULING NAMMCO 28

Having adopted the new cycle of meetings where the annual meetings of both the Scientific Committee and the Commission will be held in the first half of the year (see under agenda item 3.5), considering that decisions required for the continuation of NAMMCO's work had been taken during the present meeting, and that any further decisions needed in the near future could also be taken remotely, the Council **agreed** that the 28th Annual Meeting of NAMMCO (meetings of the Management Committees and the Council) would be postponed to spring 2021. It was suggested that a total of 4 days, rather than the usual three, would be required to consider reports and other issues spanning a two-year period.

Following the present meeting, the dates of 23 - 26 March 2021 were decided by correspondence. NAMMCO 28 will be held in Oslo, at the Conference Centre of the National Theatre (Nationaltheatret konferansesenter).

In accordance with the newly adopted schedule of meetings, the Council **agreed** that the 27th meeting of the Scientific Committee should be moved from autumn 2020 to early 2021, if possible two months prior to NAMMCO 28.

7. ARRANGEMENT OF COUNCIL WORK IN 2020

7.1 ISSUES FOR DECISION BY CORRESPONDENCE

7.1.1 Committee on Inspection and Observation (CIO)

- Amended Guidelines to Section B of the Observation Scheme

The Council **agreed** to postpone the discussion on the Amended Guidelines to Section B of the Observation Scheme to the full Council meeting in March 2021, as this requires a more thorough review in national administrations. The timeline proposed in these guidelines would, however, be applied in organising the 2021 Observation activities.

- Proposed list of nominated observers

The Council **agreed** to review the list of observers and approve the candidates by correspondence.

- Scope of Observation Activities in 2021

A sum of NOK 300,000 was allocated to 2021 Observation Activities in the draft budget with the view to strengthening the implementation of the Observation Scheme. The allocation, however, was pending the submission by the Committee on Inspection and Observation (CIO) of a detailed plan for the scope of activities in 2021 and its subsequent approval by the Council. The scope of NAMMCO Observation Activities in 2021 will be discussed by the CIO at a video meeting scheduled for April 2020.

The Council **agreed** to consider the proposal for 2021 well enough in advance to allow the Secretariat time to plan and coordinate activities in 2021.

7.1.2 External relations

- Draft MOU with OSPAR

At its last annual meeting, the Council saw the possibility of establishing a MoU between OSPAR and NAMMCO in a positive light but considered that more time was needed for internal consultations.

The Chair and the Secretariat are currently working on a simplified draft, modelled on the MoU between OSPAR and NASCO.

The Council **agreed** that this would be dealt with by correspondence, so a proposal from NAMMCO could be forwarded to OSPAR in time for its consideration at the next relevant OSPAR meeting.

7.2 OTHER MATTERS

There were no other matters.

8. COMMUNICATION

The work related to communication and outreach is continuing, and the Secretariat is putting a large amount of effort into getting the website completed and reviewed.

The Council **agreed** to the proposal of the Chair that a general update on rescheduled activities due to COVID-19 and main decisions taken so far by Members in lieu of the Annual Meeting be posted on the NAMMCO website. A link to this information on the website will also be posted to NAMMCO's Facebook profile. The Chair and the Secretariat will work together on this update.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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APPENDIX 2: AGENDA

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
- 2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
- 3. FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**
 - 3.1. Approval of audited accounts 2019
 - 3.2. Adoption of draft budget 2021
 - 3.3. Amendment of Rules of Procedure
 - 3.4. Development of Financial Rules
 - 3.5 Proposed new timing of Scientific Committee and Annual Meetings
 - 3.6 Other issues
- 4. AMENDMENTS TO SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE WORKPLAN FOR 2020-2022**
 - 4.1 Joint NAMMCO/ICES seal modelling workshop
 - 4.2 Working Group on Narwhal in East Greenland
 - 4.3 Ringed and bearded seal working groups
- 5. AMENDMENTS TO COMMITTEE ON HUNTING METHODS WORKPLAN FOR 2020-2022**
- 6. RESCHEDULING NAMMCO 28**
- 7. ARRANGEMENT OF COUNCIL WORK IN 2020**
 - 7.1. Issues for decision by correspondence
 - 7.1.1. Committee on Inspection and Observation
 - Amended Guidelines to Section B of the Observation Scheme
 - Proposed list of nominated observers
 - Scope of activities in 2021
 - 7.1.2. External relations
 - Draft MOU with OSPAR
 - 7.2. Other matters
- 8. COMMUNICATION**
- 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

APPENDIX 3: LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Document reference	Title	Agenda item
COUNCIL/2020-01/01	Annotated agenda and list of documents	all
COUNCIL/2020-01/02	2019-2020 Report of the FAC	3, 4, 5
COUNCIL/2020-01/03	Overview NAMMCO budgets 2020-2021	3.2
NAMMCO/28/05	Audited accounts 2019	3.1
NAMMCO/28/18	Proposed changes to RoPs regarding deadlines for submitting meeting documents	3.3
FAC/2020-01/3rev	Committees Workplans	4

APPENDIX 4: AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2019

INCOME & EXPENDITURE	NOK
Contributions	4,646,980
Interest	11,927
Employers Tax	295,942
NASS	128,151
Total income	5,083,000
Expenditure	
Staff related costs	3,284,825
Internship	142,583
Rent of premises	232,443
Meetings	98,058
Travel and subsistence	363,662
Office supply	98,591
Communication & outreach	97,114
Accounts & auditing	179,384
Capacity building	19,230
Other expenses	42,291
Scientific Committee	100,982
Performance review	267,223
NASS	128,151
GROM	15,300
Financial costs	5,365
Total expenditure	5,075,202
OPERATING RESULT	7,798
BALANCE	
Assets	
Outstanding claims	574,289
Claim employee	-471
Bank deposits	3,770,501
Total assets	4,344,319
Equity	
General Reserve	573,514
Restricted equity	600,000
Result 2019	7,798
Total equity	1,181,312
Liabilities	
Membership contributions	2,963,652
Creditors	199,355
Total liabilities	3,163,007
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	4,344,319

APPENDIX 5: FORECAST EXPENDITURE 2020 AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET 2021

	Forecast expenditure 2020	Provisional draft budget 2021
Income	(per 030420)	
Contributions Faroes	592,090	603,932
Contributions Greenland	592,090	603,932
Contributions Iceland	1,184,180	1,207,864
Contributions Norway	2,371,614	2,419,046
Employers tax covered by Norway	265,000	265,000
Interest		
	Total income	5,004,974
Expenditure		
Staff related costs	3,859,134	3,317,903
Internship	150,000	150,000
Staff travel and subsistence	180,000	325,000
Meetings	53,500	208,000
Office rent	245,000	257,000
Office supply	100,000	80,000
Communication and outreach	120,000	150,000
Accounts and auditing	190,000	200,000
Observation Scheme	166,000	300,000
Committee for Hunting Methods	10,000	238,500
Committee for Inspection and Observation	-	-
Working Group on BYCELS	-	-
Scientific Committee	197,500	269,500
Capacity building	20,000	20,000
Other expenses	70,000	70,000
Financial costs	5,000	5,000
	Total expenditure	5,366,134
	OPERATING BALANCE	-361,160
Total Reserve	1,181,312	820,152
Transfer to/from general reserve	-361,160	-491,130
	New Total Reserve 31.12	820,152
	329,022	
Earmarked Reserve	600,000	329,022
General Reserve	220,152	-

GENERAL NOTES

Forecast Expenditure 2020: based on expenditures per 24 March, as well as Council adopted activities for 2020 and COVID-19 rescheduling of activities as per 030420. The increased expenditure in the forecast as compared to the 2020 budget reflects that cost of transferring of the pension scheme fell in 2020 and not in 2019 as planned.

Draft budget 2021 is based on:

Income : based on the agreed 2% increase in members contribution

Expenditure : based on proposed recommendations from Committees to Council and experience from previous years, as well as COVID-19 rescheduling of activities as per 030420.