

GUIDELINES FOR THE SECRETARIAT OF NAMMCO ON THE PARTICIPATION OF STAFF MEMBERS IN EXTERNAL FIELDWORK AND OTHER TASKS

Background to the guidelines:

In previous years, Daniel Pike, Scientific Secretary at the Secretariat, has participated in fieldwork in 2001, 2003 and 2004, twice for Iceland and once for Greenland. During 2005, he was invited to lead an aerial survey in Iceland, which he accepted with the agreement of the General Secretary and Council. Later in the autumn of 2005, he was invited to lead an aerial survey in Greenland, which he accepted with agreement from the General Secretary. These surveys have generally taken between 2-4 weeks of his time away from the NAMMCO office. Travel and living expenses had previously been paid for by Iceland (twice) and Greenland (once), whereas NAMMCO had covered the salary when he worked for Iceland, while Greenland had paid half his salary in 2003. In 2005, all his expenses and his salary were covered by Iceland and Greenland. It is important to note the distinction between essentially national surveys and those of NASS which are internationally generated, coordinated and designed through the Scientific Committee of NAMMCO, and in which the Scientific Secretary is expected to play a significant role and contribute time to the fieldwork. Only the 2001 survey in Iceland was part of the NASS.

The questions put forward to the Finance and Administration Committee at its January 2005 meeting were if participating in such fieldwork was acceptable, and if so, who should pay the salary, as this aspect had not been consistent.

The Committee saw it as beneficial to the organisation that its staff members gained skills and experience through endeavours of this kind. External collaboration of this kind increases the Secretariat's competence, broadens the network and raises the international profile of NAMMCO. A precondition for undertaking such extra work would be that it does not conflict with other priorities set by the Council, and that the General Secretary approves.

The Committee however, did not reach a conclusion on this matter, and agreed to forward the question to the Heads of Delegations of Council. At this point in March 2005, at the Heads of Delegation meeting, it was recommended that the General Secretary create some guidelines as to what kind of external work would be acceptable to NAMMCO and also some rules as to responsibility for payment of expenses and salary.

The broad terms of reference were:

1. Guidance to Secretariat staff on acceptability of external work
2. Consideration of benefits to the Secretariat in relation to other duties
3. Certainty that such external work does not conflict with other duties
4. Guidance on Secretariat salaries during fieldwork and other tasks for member countries
5. Permission to be granted at the discretion of the General Secretary.

1. Guidance to Secretariat staff on acceptability of external work:

The staff of NAMMCO are currently comprised of professionally qualified and experienced staff, fully competent in their field of expertise. Needless to say, the staff have arrived at this position after many years of specialist studies and work experiences upon which NAMMCO now depend. In terms of continued acquisition of relevant work experience and exercising

existing skills, and also career development, it is important that staff are able, on occasion, to be involved in external projects that utilise their expertise and knowledge. In the case that NAMMCO member countries request specific help, advice and leadership in work projects from NAMMCO staff members, it would seem very appropriate that staff members can be available to accept. Being able to draw on such expertise is in fact an extra advantage for NAMMCO member countries, and should in principle be encouraged.

The current examples of such projects that have been undertaken all involve aerial surveys, for which Daniel Pike has special skills. However, other types of tasks may come to mind in the future, where NAMMCO staff members may be requested to undertake data compilations, reports and analytical tasks for individual member countries. It is also important to bear in mind that surveys also involve a fair amount of analytical work. The guidelines on acceptable work should therefore be somewhat wider than originally envisaged, and not merely restricted to fieldwork. This will prevent the same type of issue be raised again over different work issues in the future.

The guidelines for acceptable work should thus include the following:

1. Work project that is directly relevant to the overall goals of NAMMCO
2. Work project that is organised by or involves a NAMMCO member country
3. Work project that will utilise and/or enhance the special skills and experience of the NAMMCO staff member, and may be fieldwork, data analysis, laboratory work, report writing, or other specialist task, and will be accredited in due course (publications, presentations, etc.)
4. Work that the invited staff member is personally willing to undertake
5. Work that will not exceed a total of 6 weeks in any 12 month period, and generally less than 4 weeks at a time on any individual project – unless specific permission is given by the General Secretary
6. There should be no obligation for a NAMMCO staff member to feel pressured into accepting such external work.

2. Consideration of benefits to the Secretariat in relation to other duties:

This aspect is generally transparent as the taking on of specialist external work will enhance experience and initiative, as well as increasing the network of contacts. Above all, such work – if undertaken within other member countries – gives extra insights into the status, special needs and problems faced in member countries. On the matters of career development, these external work project participations keep staff members fresh in their field, and provide better in-depth perspectives when dealing with NAMMCO tasks and issues.

3. Certainty that such external work does not conflict with other duties:

With reference to the guidance given in item 2. above, the possibility of conflict in terms of work content with other duties may still be possible, but may also be synergistic on occasions. In cases where there is doubt, the General Secretary should intervene and decide. In all cases however, it is clear that timing will be important, and here conflicts may arise. If external work schedules overlap with current NAMMCO work schedules, then NAMMCO must take precedence. As an example of this, participation in an aerial survey in Greenland commencing in September 2005 was cut short because of a series of NAMMCO Working Group meetings throughout October.

4. Guidance on Secretariat salaries during fieldwork and other tasks for member countries:

Although it is recognised that participation in external work projects as defined above are beneficial to the NAMMCO Secretariat staff, and to NAMMCO generally, it is clear that all such involvements must attract full reimbursement of costs (travel, *per diem*, etc.) as set out by NAMMCO rules, by the member country requesting services. In addition, it is important that rules be laid down for salary payment. In the past this has been variable. The simplest and fairest arrangement is that there is one rule for all, and that is that the staff member shall continue to receive salary from NAMMCO while on such “secondments”, and at the completion of the project, NAMMCO Secretariat will invoice the host member country accordingly for the proportion of net salary (tax-paid) used while on duty elsewhere. On survey work, for example, in addition to active duty, this shall also include travel time and “on-call” time which means for example, waiting for good weather or such on site, even if the staff member is able to do other tasks.

Exceptions to this salary rule will be NAMMCO-coordinated projects such as NASS. It has already been stated in the background preamble that such surveys traditionally require active input from the Secretariat, and normally have not required salary reimbursement. In future cases the participating staff member will continue to be paid directly by NAMMCO during surveys.

There may be other NAMMCO-coordinated projects that arise in the future where it may be appropriate for NAMMCO staff to participate at no extra cost to member countries, and there should be flexibility to allow negotiation on this point in the future.

In general, it may be noted that other participatory work projects that arise will be judged on a case by case basis, and the General Secretary will decide on how to proceed.

5. Permission to be granted at the discretion of the General Secretariat:

Subsequent to satisfying all the above guidelines, permission must be granted by the General Secretary of NAMMCO before external work is undertaken. However, if all guidelines are followed, then this should merely be a formality.

It is possible that there may be special situations that arise in the future where a staff member may be sought after to undertake work that may not have immediate direct relevance to NAMMCO or be coordinated by a non-member country or organisation (e.g. Canada or the EU). In such cases, the General Secretary should be called upon to decide if there is a conflict of interest, and may confer with Council as to a suitable decision if considered necessary. However, even if such work collaborations may be seen as advantageous, a rule of thumb might be adopted that unpaid leave should be taken and all expenses and salary payments must be sought externally by the staff member. Again, it will be important that neither the subject or timing of such work collaborations are in conflict with NAMMCO work goals and schedules.

Should the external work be undertaken by the General Secretary, then the Chair of Council should be consulted in the first instance.

Finally, a list of all fieldwork and other commitments undertaken by Secretariat staff should be submitted to the FAC annually.