



NORTH ATLANTIC MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

TWENTY FOURTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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**DOCUMENT 25 DRAFT COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH
STRATEGY**

Submitted by: Finance and Administration Committee

The Finance and Administration Committee (FAC)

- **Considering** that it would be beneficial for NAMMCO to have a Communication and Outreach Strategy in order to have a more focussed and coherent information work.
- **Recommend** therefore Council to
 - Take note of the document,
 - Support the idea of NAMMCO adopting a Communication and Outreach Strategy,
 - Task FAC to continue developing such strategy on the basis of the present document with the goal of adopting such Strategy at the next meeting of the Council.

Background: NAMMCO has not at present formulated and adopted a Communication and Outreach Strategy.



COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH STRATEGY

DRAFT JANUARY 2016

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1. BACKGROUND

NAMMCO is not widely known outside its own community (Council, subsidiary bodies and observers). Communication and outreach has not been prioritised in NAMMCO, and what NAMMCO does and its success stories has not be actively and largely communicated.

NAMMCO is not widely recognised as a credible source of information by the media, other organisations and the inhabitants of its four member countries, although it holds a significant amount of information. NAMMCO's crucial – and effective – role in the conservation of Northern and Arctic marine mammals is largely unrecognised.

However, in dealing with iconic species and potentially controversial topics affecting the life - and survival - of coastal communities, NAMMCO bears in itself a strong outreach and communication potential.

NAMMCO is a unique and active forum whose activities deserve to be disseminated. However, its small size and the larger size and prominence of its *peers* require NAMMCO to conduct a proactive and focussed communication in order to stand out.

The design of a communication strategy is a step in the right direction and a first move towards prioritizing communication within NAMMCO. It represents a necessary base for the development of a productive and fruitful communication work within NAMMCO.

A communication strategy shall take into account NAMMCO's two important handicaps in term of visibility, outreach and communication. 1) It is a very small and specialised organisation with a small community, 2) It has a very small and non-communication specialised secretariat.

2017 will be the 25-year Jubilee of NAMMCO and is an opportunity and platform for NAMMCO to mark and flag itself as an appropriate and credible management organisation.

Last but not least, a good communication will underpin the transparency of NAMMCO, and in particular the process leading to its management advice, which is a *condicio sine qua non* for an organisation dealing with controversial areas.

2. FUNCTION OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The communication strategy provides an overarching framework for all of NAMMCO's communication work. It also provides a basis for individual NAMMCO actors (Chairs, Committees and Working Groups) to also think in terms of communication and visibility and support their communication activities.

The communication strategy addresses long-term communication objectives, overarching messages, various target groups and different types of communication channels for NAMMCO. It focuses on both external and internal communication. It helps promoting the visibility of the organisation, as well as supporting transparency.

2.1 Communication plans

More detailed communication plans for priority issues, projects and events (annual meetings, outreach events, symposium, 25-year Jubilee, etc.) are prepared. NAMMCO Secretariat will, under the direction of FAC and in collaboration with all NAMMCO's actors, play the central role in coordinating and integrating the overarching communication strategy and the communication plans.

2.2 The basis for NAMMCO's communication

Information on NAMMCO shall be easily accessible and adapted to target groups as a basic prerequisite to good communication. All NAMMCO documents shall be made accessible on the website.

To be efficient, NAMMCO Communication need to be developed in both long and short terms, proactive and responsive.

2.2.1 Long term / Short term

A combination of long-term and short-term communication measures is needed if NAMMCO is to be largely perceived as active, relevant, credible, a source of information and a prominent body in the sphere of Arctic conservation and wild mammal species management. The communication strategy's objectives, messages, target groups and channels shall be used in both long-term and short-term communication work.

2.2.2 Proactive

A proactive communication is a prerequisite for NAMMCO to stand out, because of the small size and specialised scope of the organisation, as well as the larger size and prominence of its peers.

2.2.3 Responsive and Cooperative

NAMMCO deals with a controversial field, and great attention shall be given to conducting a responsive and cooperative communication, and not a reactive and confrontational one. A facts based responsive and cooperative communication is much more productive and has much more potential as a breeding ground for exchange and understanding.

2.2.4 Factual, not emotional

NAMMCO communication must be factual, even in its advocacy part.

3. COMMUNICATION GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The **overarching goal** for NAMMCO communication is:

- **To be perceived as the pre-eminent and effective forum for the conservation and management of marine mammals in the Arctic region.**

The **objectives** of the communication work are to convey that NAMMCO is:

- appropriate and credible,
- active (science, conservation and welfare),
- relevant in the present debate on Climate Change and Food Security,
- a credible source of information for all target groups, including the media,
- founded upon a transparent management advice-generating process based on best practices and science,
- the only international management forum for pinnipeds,
- a good partner for dialogue and cooperation.

The terms and pace for the realisation of the objectives must take into consideration the available resources.

3.1 Indicators for realisation of the objectives:

NAMMCO is seen in the media and/or in material informing decisions.

- Referral to NAMMCO, or its material, in discussions and in connection with decisions affecting the Arctic marine mammals and/or by competitive organisations like AC and IWC,
- Recognition of NAMMCO among the target groups.

Indicators shall be made measurable, when possible, so as to enable regular checks on how well the objectives are being realised. Realisation of the objectives implies that NAMMCO information become easily detectable and available to

- First step: policy makers, IGOs and NGOs and scientists
- Second step: the wider public as well educational sectors.

The overarching communication goal is long-term and shall be carried across the entire communication strategy period. To be effective in ongoing operative communication, this goal shall be broken down into short-term objectives for NAMMCO's activities/communication plans. The short-term objectives and how they contribute to the overarching goal must be clearly defined in each communication plan.

4. MESSAGES

4.1 Principle

NAMMCO is not an advocacy body for the hunting of marine mammals, but a management and conservation organisation. NAMMCO acknowledges the right and needs of coastal communities to make a living from what the sea can provide, including marine mammals. From this standpoint, NAMMCO strives for the sustainable use of these resources.

This being so, NAMMCO can advocate for

- The protection and conservation of the marine environment, where the species thrive (focus on climate change and other anthropogenic threats - pollution, bycatch, noise disturbance, any ship-based activities (fishing, shipping...), etc.,

- Marine mammals as food resources, contributing to food security of coastal communities.

4.2 Key messages

NAMMCO's overall message shall be formulated in a few key messages.

- NAMMCO is the most credible and relevant international forum for issues concerning Marine Mammal in the Arctic and Northern Atlantic Ocean,
- NAMMCO underpins sustainable use of marine resources, thus supporting the preservation of biodiversity in the Arctic,
- NAMMCO underpins sustainable use of marine mammals, thus supporting food security and sustainable and resilient communities in the Arctic,
- NAMMCO ensures that issues associated with the Arctic region and the environment of Arctic Marine Mammals are high-lighted and given priority,
- NAMMCO, by addressing the effect of climate change on important food resources, supports food security and resilient communities in the Arctic,
- NAMMCO promotes sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable development for the benefit of Arctic and Nordic inhabitants and communities.

4.3 Key information to be delivered

Communication in NAMMCO shall strive to

- Conveying the pluralities of marine mammal species and stocks and consequently the pluralities of conservation issues,
- Conveying NAMMCO management advices,
- Explaining the process behind the management advice, so it is transparent and credible,
- Explaining conservation issues for marine mammal stocks in the light of climate change,
- Reporting on the conservation status of marine mammal stocks,
- Conveying the effectiveness of management measures,
- Conveying that direct and indirect removals are equal in terms of management (although catch is controlled, while bycatch is not),
- Informing about the importance of marine mammals in the life of Nordic and Arctic communities (food resource, culture, art, social identity and cohesion) and the effect of imposed restrictions (EU bans),
- Informing about the advance in the general knowledge on marine mammals through the work conducted in NAMMCO and NAMMCO countries,
- Conveying that, in the time of Climate Change, and its likely tremendous effects in the North and the Arctic, it is essential to concentrate on *conservation* issues, i.e., issues important at the population level,
- Conveying the good marine mammal stories, such as the increase of humpback and fin whale populations in the North Atlantic.

5. TARGET GROUPS

5.1 Internal target groups – NAMMCO actors

An important and primary target group is the NAMMCO community, composed of three different categories, managers, scientists and users.

NAMMCO Member States, Committees, Working Groups and Observers are internal target groups.

5.2 External target groups

Eight primary external target groups have been identified for NAMMCO's external communication work. Three other groups are also important but maybe not the first focus priority.

These target groups are relatively broad and there is a need to more clearly define and develop the target groups over time. Actors within each target group need be identified and characterised according to their attitude to NAMMCO (from friendly to opponent). Although the overall message remains the same, the way to express it and substantiate it might be quite different. Another important distinction might be origin of the actors, from NAMMCO countries (somewhat familiar with whaling and sealing) or the outside world.

5.2.1 Policy Makers / Managers

Policy-makers who may take decisions that affect the conservation of marine mammals in the Arctic are the most important target group. They shall be aware of NAMMCO and the issues taking place in the Arctic and Nordic region.

5.2.2 Users of marine mammals in the Nordic and Arctic region

As direct stakeholders, it is crucial that they understand the basis of the management advice and its long-term sustainability goal, so they are pro-actors and not anti-actors.

5.2.3 Journalist/Media representatives

Journalists are important both as a channel and as a target group. The separate communication plans shall specify which [type of] journalists/media are relevant for each issue, project or event.

5.2.4 Inhabitants of Member Countries

Member State wider publics and people who live in, or in close proximity to the Arctic geographical area.

5.2.5 IGOs and NGOs with an interest in the Arctic Region

Both nationally and internationally leading and relevant IGOs and NGOs, such as the major environment associations, play a significant role in the debate on developments in the Arctic environment.

5.2.6 NGOs with an interest in Marine Mammal Conservation

Internationally leading and relevant NGOs, such as the major environmental associations, play a significant role in the debate on animal conservation and conservation policies. They also shape the public opinion and qualitative characterisation of the whaling/sealing issues.

5.2.7 The Scientific and Research Community active on Arctic issues

The part of the scientific and research community that addresses issues with a bearing on the Arctic contribute to local, regional and global awareness and understanding of the changing Arctic region.

5.2.8 The Scientific and Research Community with an interest in Marine Mammals

They support the shaping of the public and NGOs opinion and qualitative characterisation of the whaling/sealing issues.

5.2.9 Miscellaneous

5.2.9.1 *The larger public outside NAMMCO countries*

It is a group of importance of heterogeneous composition in terms of opinions, of which the conspicuous voices are the opponents to using marine mammal as resources. In general, there is a limited understanding of the pluralities of issues in marine mammal conservation, realities of life in the higher latitudes and Arctic issues.

5.2.9.2 *Youth, kids and educational sectors*

Providing the younger generations with an objective, scientific and factual alternative to the holy-making of marine mammals, and transmitting to them the vision NAMMCO has on conservation and use of marine mammals is important for securing the future.

5.2.9.3 *The business sector with an interest in the Arctic*

The part of the business sector that has an interest in the Arctic region could become a target group. This applies primarily to the resource development, energy, environment, transport and tourism sectors. They shall be made aware of the responsibilities that come from being active in the Arctic and the risks to marine mammals associated with development in the Arctic. However, these might be, at least in the first place, likely better reached indirectly, through a stronger cooperation with the AC.

6. CHANNELS AND ACTIVITIES

Strategic and resource-efficient communication work builds on a combination of communication measures. Priority channels and activities for NAMMCO are specified below.

6.1 Website

NAMMCO website shall function as a hub and umbrella for all communication and transparency within NAMMCO and contain all the information to be disseminated.

The website is the most important information and transparency channel for NAMMCO. However it needs to be significantly optimised. It also need to be supported and publicised by other channels like Facebook, Twitter and blogs in order to increase its activity

6.1.1 Optimisation

NAMMCO website holds a significant amount of information, some very detailed like the stock status pages. This is positive, but adequate tools are required for allowing to get an overall grip of which information is at hand and making it easy to locate specific information.

6.1.1.1 *Facilitating access to information*

NAMMCO target groups are many, and thoughts have to be put in designing the website for responding to the target groups' needs and not just according to the organisation. As NAMMCO can only have one website, the access of the different target groups to "their" information has to be facilitated and optimised.

One essential feature, presently missing on the NAMMCO website, is a search engine. Other possibilities include summary sheets/tables, linked to more detailed information. Such summary tables could for example be provided on stock status, national management measures in NAMMCO parties, recipes, management advices, etc.

6.1.1.2 *Increasing activity*

Effort shall be made in publicising the website to increase activity on it. This can be done in a number of ways, specific to different target groups. Increasing internal activity can be accomplished by using the website as the user portal, i.e., as the site containing all information and documents related to any NAMMCO meetings and events. This will have a snow-ball communication effect, with actors visiting the website for finding a specific information and using time looking at other information.

A Weblog, or *blog*, which is a collection of short articles, essays, or loosely-formatted thoughts, is a useful medium to get NAMMCO message out. Blogs also encourage reader comments, making them a valuable tool for gathering target groups feedback. If connected to the NAMMCO website, it will help increasing activity around it.

Blog and channels like Facebook and Twitter should as much as possible refer back to the website, acting as teasers for specific information contained in the website. As such they will help building awareness to the website and NAMMCO in general and act as diplomats.

6.1.1.3 *Increasing credibility and appeal*

To profile NAMMCO as active, relevant and credible, the website contains up- to-date information about NAMMCO and its activities, provides contact details for the press and when feasible short stories or trailers, offers links to the various NAMMCO actors and

regularly presents news, topical issues and events related to NAMMCO. Live images/video material shall be used, when possible.

The website is continuously updated so that its content, but also its design and technology are up to date. Species information becomes available on all marine mammals present in the NAMMCO area, with as a priority hunted species and stocks.

6.1.1.4 Responsible actors

NAMMCO Secretariat is responsible for ensuring that the website is up to date, but all NAMMCO actors shall be responsible for providing material regularly.

6.2 Other web-based platforms/Media

NAMMCO shall keep abreast of new digital forums and channels on which it should be visible. Presence on digital/social channels, such as Facebook (FB) and Twitter, maybe You Tube, will complement other media work and the website. They will be useful to [reach] different target groups and built awareness of NAMMCO.

FB is a more popular media and Twitter a good way to reach journalists. Both help bringing target groups to the website. Stories on twitter and FB shall as much as possible act as teasers for longer stories on the website.

NAMMCO Secretariat is responsible for ensuring that NAMMCO is regularly active on the social media, but all NAMMCO actors shall be responsible for providing material and input.

6.2.1 Wikipedia

Wikipedia is one of the most used on-line encyclopaedias, visited by many as a first step to information. NAMMCO's page on Wikipedia is expanded, regularly updated and checked for negative comments or mistakes that could be introduced.

Time is invested in checking all NAMMCO-relevant Wikipedia sites and edit them, so NAMMCO is mentioned and its stock status referred to. Preparing a page on specific activities such as NASS or estimating cetacean and seal population could also be productive, especially when most of the work is already done for the NAMMCO website.

6.2.2 Social Media, a.o. Twitter and Facebook

[This part should be completed with the development of the Social Media strategy]

The main goal is to establish NAMMCO as an opinion maker, based on solid research and factual information. This is done through

- Monitoring relevant debates on online media and interacting via Twitter,
- Close social media networking with local and regional media - as well as some of the more important international ones,
- Identify a network of international media contacts from the BBC, the Guardian, BBC Radio, Climate Change - and relevant Nordic media,
- Social media networking with less radical environmental organisations such as WWF.

6.3 Media

NAMMCO develops its media relations and establishes ongoing contact with journalists. Relevant media and journalists are identified for each communication plan. Examples of media categories that should be included are:

- Regional and specialised media that reach people living in or visiting NAMMCO parties and the Arctic region (e.g. flight magazines).
- Relevant media in each NAMMCO country.
- National and international news agencies.
- International media with an influence on conservation debates.
- Specialist media in the area of environment and science.

The journalist categories that should be included in media work are: foreign correspondents, political journalists, science journalists, editorial writers and writers specialising in subjects that are relevant to the Arctic region (environment, tourism, biology, etc.).

Besides the event-related communication, NAMMCO seeks to contact organisers of “courses” for journalists on Arctic issues for proposing free input/presentation on NAMMCO and marine mammal conservation. The same initiative could be undertaken towards large embassies - and enterprises - in Norway.

6.3.1 Possible food for the Media

NAMMCO website must contain information targeting journalists with news stories, current issues and projects, messages, contact details, information about NAMMCO. FAQs shall be initialised and prioritised.

Inviting journalist to field works gathering information needed for feeding NAMMCO stock assessments must be interesting for many journalists, considering the interest in the Arctic region.

Stories should be fed to larger newspapers, so they get an interest in pursuing them – just a matter of telling the story right – NAMMCO has stories. NAMMCO then assists in getting the information right.

Following the life of different families living in the Arctic region and the meaning/importance of marine mammal hunting in their life could be good stuff for stories.

6.4 NAMMCO “News”

Internal news is any announcement of activities, release of reports, new assessments, population estimate etc... One potential limitation is the delayed release of reports from Committees and Working Groups (among others new stocks assessments), which deprive their release of its “news-effect”. Such policy should be re-discussed and nuanced in the light of a communication strategy.

At time, NAMMCO internal news may not be enough to generate a continual and appealing activity on NAMMCO information channels. They are supplemented by external news. These can be anything related to marine mammals (also jokes), conservation-related issues [mostly] in the NAMMCO areas, release of important reports from other IGO/NGOs, e.g. IWC, AC and subsidiary bodies, ASCOBANS. As often as

possible and relevant, it must be explained why this information is newsworthy for NAMMCO, and NAMMCO position must be flagged in some ways. Flagging other organisation's documents and findings, when factual and interesting, will brand NAMMCO as an open-minded and dialog-oriented organisation, promoting good stuff, wherever it originates from, if it can contribute to the conservation of marine mammals (contrary to an advocacy organisation's strategy).

Good news providers includes New Scientist, Arctic Portal, Northern Research Forum, Arctic Deeply, News Yahoo (Arctic), the Arctic Journal, World Wildlife Magazine, BBC, CBC news, portal of research institutes dealing with marine mammals in NAMMCO countries.

6.5 International Meeting Places

NAMMCO is present at meetings where issues concerning the Arctic region are discussed, e.g., Arctic Frontiers, Ministerial and SAO meetings of the Arctic Council. Member of the Council shall be active actors of NAMMCO communication by actively representing NAMMCO at relevant conferences, seminars and meetings of international organisations in order to increase the profile of NAMMCO. These meeting places should be identified and prioritised in order to support the long-term communication objectives.

6.6 Internal Communication

NAMMCO is a forum made up of several actors who shall work together for effective communication within NAMMCO. Effective internal communication is a prerequisite for proactive communication planning and effective communication measures. Improved internal communication is necessary in order to facilitate cooperation and create synergies.

The Secretariat has the key role in coordinating NAMMCO's communication work and in creating and developing effective routines for internal communication. Committee and Working Groups are also responsible for creating routines for providing relevant information in an effective and timely manner.

6.6.1 Measures to improve internal communication

A short internal newsletter will improve information exchange and create an overview of NAMMCO activities. The Chair and the Secretariat are responsible for the newsletter, with contributions from other actors within NAMMCO. The newsletter is sent around and accessible on the website.

The web-portal with password access will allow any NAMMCO actors to have access to all meeting and other documents from all committees, except the FAC.

One-page system – all meetings of NAMMCO subsidiary bodies shall, within 2 days, submit a one-page summary of highlights to relevant parties, including the Secretariat and the Chair.

The password area on the website can be used for uploading and sharing relevant documents, e.g. the internal newsletters.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All NAMMCO actors are responsible in different ways for implementing the communication strategy and helping to achieve specific objectives and thus the overarching communication goal.

The Chair has overall responsibility for the implementation of the communication strategy and takes its guidance from the FAC. The Chair cooperates closely with the Secretariat in long- term and short-term communication work. The Chair shall communicate on behalf of NAMMCO.

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

In consultation with FAC and the Secretariat, the Member States and Council Members shall develop communication vis-à-vis the target groups in each country/region in the Arctic. They shall assist the Secretariat with information exchange to and from NAMMCO vis-à-vis their countries/regions and continuously provide/make sure it is provided up-to-date information on their activities.

8. LANGUAGE

If/when target groups such as the wider public, youth and kids are prioritised, language may become a question. From a communication point of view, it is desirable to have more information in the parties' language, but there might be an issue of funds for translation.

However, as a beginning NAMMCO general information on the website (Home & About), as well as names of species and legends to summary tables should be available in the four parties' language. News from different countries and thus different languages shall be used, this clearly requiring an input from NAMMCO Parties.

9. RESOURCES

Resources are needed and essential to realise the ambitions in the communication strategy. The level of resources has a direct effect on the communication strategy's chances of making a forceful impact.

The NAMMCO Secretariat is composed of three persons, and has currently no information Officer or information specialist nor a *communication* budget. Resources, both man power and funds, are channelled to the NAMMCO communication strategy. This is especially needed in the implementation phase, and to exploit the kick-off effect that the Jubilee represents.

10. PRIORITIES AND TIMETABLE

Making the work of NAMMCO more widely known among priority target groups and strengthening NAMMCO as an international actor is a long-term project. The communication strategy shall be thought as a 10 year period, with a first implementation plan addressing a shorter period, e.g. 3 years.

In order that the kick-off opportunity of the 25-year Jubilee be utilised, a general implementation plan is drawn as soon as possible, integrating a communication plan designed for the Jubilee.

Another essential element, maybe not the easiest and certainly a long-term effort, is switching the mind of all NAMMCO actors, including the Secretariat and the Council, to communication mode, so they envisage their input to NAMMCO also in terms of communication. Daily opportunities (particularly “cheap” ones) must be caught - and use, and the element *communication* must be embedded in their work and reporting.

10.1 Priorities

The most important priorities are:

- **Allocate extra resources to communication in the start-phase of the implementation strategy, thus allowing to build up and then profit of and build upon the Jubilee kick-off effect**
- **Established an implementation plan**
- **Increase activity on the website, implement the social media strategy, define and implement a communication plan for the 25-year Jubilee.**

10.2 2016 Schedule

10.2.1 Immediate action

- 1) Website: boosting activities with four priorities
 - a. Systematically use as an information portal for NAMMCO actors to convey all information,
 - b. Update species information on existing pages (e.g. new assessment results),
 - c. Establishing a blogging practice,
 - d. Create summary-pages.
- 2) Social media: boost FB and implement Twitter (a.o. as a support to the Website).
- 3) Established a central communication pool at the Secretariat, accessible by all.
- 4) Define a communication plan for the 25-year Jubilee and initiate implementation.

10.2.2 First half of 2016

- 1) Continue implementing Immediate Actions.
- 2) Create species pages for all “NAMMCO” species, prioritising exploited species.
- 3) Identify a new website provider, providing a more user friendly system controlled as much as possible by the Secretariat and offering a nicer design, more flexible and offering more possibilities. The website must have a web-portal, password specific areas, activity statistics and a search engine.

- 4) Initiate the transfer of the website.
- 5) Check Wikipedia site and “insert” NAMMCO.

10.2.3 Second half of 2016

- 1) Continue implementing the aboves.
- 2) Pro-actively contact entities organising courses for journalists on Arctic issues, embassies and other international event generators in Norway.
- 3) Define communication plans for all NAMMCO activities and actors.

11. EVALUATION

A review will be carried out in the beginning of 2018, thus after the jubilee year. The implementation plan might be adjusted, taking into account the experience gained.

A SWOT on communication will be performed at the end of the 3-year implementation plan.

The resulting impact of NAMMCO activity on the social media (flow of persons engaged, responses...) shall be monitored, in order to adjust the effort and adapt the information released, to give some priorities to those generating a larger activity.