



NAMMCO ANNUAL MEETING 29

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MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

DOCUMENT 18	DATA POLICY FOR NAMMCO SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS
Submitted by	Secretariat
Action requested	To consider all three proposals for the data policy of NAMMCO Scientific Publications (point 1.3 of this document) and provide feedback to the Secretariat on the preferred version.
Background/content	NAMMCO Scientific Publications (NSP) is an open access journal, which under the Science Europe Plan S initiative should follow an open data archiving. Council 28 requested the Secretariat to develop a draft data policy for the NSP and to circulate this to Member Countries to consider and comment on in more detail at a later stage. The Scientific Secretary will inform on the progress of this process.

1. DATA POLICY FOR NAMMCO SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

1.1 BACKGROUND

Aligned with NAMMCO's commitment to transparency and belief in the importance of open access to scientific research that informs and supports management decision-making, *NAMMCO Scientific Publications* (NSP) is a free open access journal. In 2019, the SC also agreed that the work be done to make the journal compliant with Plan S. Plan S is an initiative taken by research funding bodies to advance full open access to scientific research, which entered into operation in 2021 (more information is available on Plan S here: <https://www.coalition-s.org/>). One of the features required for this is that the journal have a data policy that makes clear the journal's position regarding the data underlying the results presented in published articles. While the SC supported the principle of open access to data, it requested that the Member Countries discuss their position on this, particularly in relation to survey data. At the 28th Council meeting in 2021, the question was tabled for discussion and as a result, the Secretariat was requested to develop a draft data policy for the NSP and to circulate this to Member Countries to consider and comment on in more detail at a later stage.

1.2 A NEW DATA REPOSITORY SPECIFIC TO NSP?

In 2019, the Scientific Secretary had a meeting with the person responsible for managing Septentrio (the platform publishing NSP) at the University of Tromsø and a representative from the Dataverse Network Norway. Dataverse offered to provide NSP with the infrastructure for its own open data archive. This offer to provide an open access data repository specific to the journal was free of charge for NSP as a member of the Septentrio publishing platform. A detailed presentation of what this would entail and require is archived on the Sharepoint. While administering our own data repository would provide some benefits for the NAMMCO community, upon further consideration, the Secretariat does not see this as a realistic avenue to implement. Although the infrastructure provided by dataverse was impressive and would require little from NAMMCO during the establishment phase, extensive discussions between the Member Countries would be required on the principles for ownership and data sharing associated with the repository and curating the submission of datasets would also be an additional demand on the limited time of the small Secretariat. Furthermore, many research institutes already have their own data repositories that researchers publishing in NSP may use and therefore it is not necessary that NAMMCO take on the additional load of coordinating and maintaining such a repository specific to its journal. A large international repository for marine mammal sightings data in the North Atlantic (the Joint Cetacean Data Program, coordinated the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee and hosted by ICES) has also now been established and will launch in 2022, which also reduces the need for NAMMCO to develop its own repository for NSP.

Given the workload involved and the existence of available alternatives, the Secretariat proposes that NAMMCO not proceed with the offer to develop a specific data repository for NSP at this time.

1.3 DRAFT DATA POLICY FOR NSP - 3 DIFFERENT VERSIONS

Even without its own data repository, the NSP journal still needs to have a data policy to be Plan S compliant. That is, it needs to have available on its website a short statement clarifying its position regarding the data underlying the scientific articles it publishes. As a journal committed to open science and transparent sharing of information relevant to environmental management and decision-making, it is natural that the journal also aims to support open data sharing. The data policy of NSP can, however, do this in different ways and to different degrees. It can, for example, adopt different positions regarding how strongly this position is expressed and how firm the journal is in its requirements that publications are based on openly shared data.

Below are three different drafts of a data policy for the journal - all supporting the value of open data sharing in principle. In the softest version, the data policy simply *encourages* authors to store their data in public repositories, without this being a formal requirement. In a slightly stronger version, the journal does not just encourage but rather *expects* that data is openly shared. In the third and strongest version, it becomes a requirement for publication that data is archived in a public repository.

The Member Countries are invited to consider all three of these alternative proposals for the data policy of the NAMMCO Scientific Publications Series and provide feedback to the Secretariat on the preferred version. Amendments to the draft text on each alternative are also welcome.

1. Soft Version - No “Requirements” for open data archiving, just “Encouragement”

The NAMMCO Scientific Publications Series encourages all authors to make the data supporting the results in their paper available and accessible by archiving it in an appropriate public data repository. Authors may provide a data availability statement at the end of their paper, including a link to the repository they have used and a persistent identifier (e.g., a DOI for the data, or an accession number) from the repository.

2. Stronger Version - No “Requirements” for open data archiving, but “Expectations”

NAMMCO Scientific Publications expects that data supporting the results in published articles is made publicly available and accessible through being archived in a public repository. Authors should provide a data availability statement at the end of their article describing the availability or absence of open access to their supporting data. When data have been shared, authors are asked to include in their data availability statement a link to the repository they have used and the relevant reference number or persistent identifier for the shared data. Whenever possible, the scripts and other artefacts used to generate the analyses presented in the paper should also be publicly archived. If sharing data compromises ethical standards or legal requirements, authors are not expected to share it, although this should be justified and explained in the data availability statement.

3. Strongest Version - Requirements for open data archiving for publications in the journal

NAMMCO Scientific Publications requires, as a condition for publication, that the data supporting the results presented in a paper are archived in a public repository. Authors are required to provide a data availability statement at the end of their article, including a link to the repository they have used, and the reference details/persistent identifier information for their dataset. Whenever possible, the scripts and other artefacts used to generate the analyses presented in the paper should also be publicly archived. Exceptions may be granted at the discretion of the editor, if for example, sharing data compromises ethical standards or legal requirements. If authors are unable to share their data in an open public repository they must describe and justify this in their data availability statement during the submission of their article for the editor to consider.

Example data availability statement for inclusion at the end of the publication:

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in [repository name] at [doi] / [URL], reference number [unique identifying number].