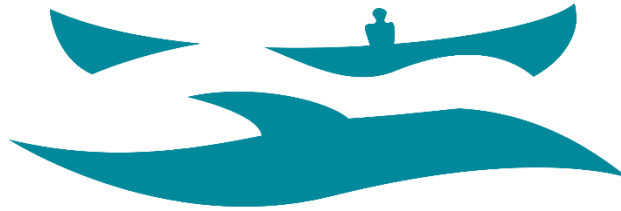


NAMMCO



30 Years: 1992 - 2022

NAMMCO COMMUNICATION PLAN 2023 – 2024 (CP3)

(Endorsed by Council 29, 2022)

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1. BACKGROUND

NAMMCO Communication Strategy (COS) and Communication Plans (CPs) were generated following an increased awareness of the Commission of the necessity of being visible, and consequently the necessity of elaborating a well-defined and tuned message, anchored in facts but also in the present conservation discourse and issues. Both the COS and the CPs support broadening the visibility of the organisation, but also support its transparency. The COS was adopted by NAMMCO 25 ([COS 2017](#)) and provides an overarching long-term framework for NAMMCO's communication and outreach work, while shorter legs of implementation in the form of Communication Plans (CP) address shorter periods of 2 years.

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 COS is seen as a 10-years initiative, addressing long-term communication objectives, overarching messages, target groups and types of communication channels. It focuses on both external and internal communication. The CPs build on the COS but go into more detail, outlining the specific focus for the period covered and the planned activities.

NAMMCO has had two previous communication plans, CP1 for the period 2017-2018 and CP2 for the period 2019-2020. CP2 extended in practice to the period 2021-2022, because of the COVID-related restriction, and the postponement of Council meeting 28 to March 2021 and the shorter meeting in 2021 where communication was not prioritised.

The present CP, CP3, describes the focus of the communication and outreach work for the two-year period 2023-2024.

2. COS 2027 IN SHORT

2.1 COS VISION, MISSION, AND KEY MESSAGES

COS 2017 Vision

NAMMCO is perceived as the pre-eminent and most effective forum for the conservation and management of marine mammals in the North Atlantic.

COS 2017 Mission

To provide factual, timely and clear information on marine mammals and related issues

COS 2017 Goals

NAMMCO communication and outreach shall

- Develop a higher level of visibility, especially in NAMMCO countries
- Support transparency
- Convey that NAMMCO is:
 - appropriate and credible
 - active (in science, conservation and welfare)
 - relevant in current debates (e.g., Arctic Issues, Climate Change, Food Security, Animal Welfare and Blue Growth)
 - a credible source of information
 - founded upon a transparent management advice-generating process
 - based on best practices, science and local knowledge
 - the only international management forum for pinnipeds
 - a good partner for dialogue and cooperation.

2.2 COS 2017 GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

To be efficient, NAMMCO Communication needs to be developed for both the long and short terms, and also needs to be proactive, responsive and cooperative, factual and not emotional.

- *Proactive communication is a prerequisite for NAMMCO because of the small size and specialised scope of the organisation.*
- *NAMMCO deals with a controversial field, and attention shall be given to conducting responsive and cooperative activities rather than reactive and confrontational ones.*
- *NAMMCO communication must be factual. Fact based, responsive and cooperative communication is much more productive and has much more potential as a breeding ground for exchange and understanding.*

The communication strategy shall consider NAMMCO's two main handicaps in terms of visibility, outreach and communication:

- *It is a very small and specialised organisation with a small community*
- *It has a very small and non-communication specialised secretariat.*

2.3 KEY MESSAGES & INFORMATION TO BE DISSEMINATED

Cos 2017 also defined key messages that NAMMCO should disseminate in its communication and outreach work.

The key information was detailed in [CP1](#) and remains actual and pertinent .

3. COMMUNICATION PLAN 2023-2024

CP2 (2019-2020) focussed on replacing whaling and sealing in a global ecological perspective, under three themes: 1) Whaling and sealing in a blue economy perspective, 2) Absolute and relative environmental cost of whaling and sealing, and 3) Marine mammals as environmental-friendly contributors to food security.

Following on these global perspectives, the extension period 2021-2022 focussed on disseminating the message that

- by bringing a low-carbon and low-water protein option in places with few alternatives
- in many coastal areas around the world, and not only in the Arctic,

whaling and sealing do

- ✓ contribute to food security and sovereignty of coastal communities
- ✓ contribute to resilient and sustainable food systems (socially, economically, and environmentally)
- ✓ therefore, support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), not only 14 *Life below water*, but also 2, 11, and 12 (by improving livelihoods), and 1, 8, and 10 (by generating economic growth).

An absolute prerequisite for whaling and sealing to support the SDGs and be ecologically sound is, however, that **these activities are carried out sustainably and responsibly, and thus are effectively and efficiently managed in the wider meaning.** Such management must be based on a thorough understanding of the conservation status or marine mammal stocks and theirs and humans' role in the marine ecosystem(s).

In other words, such management requires both a strong science foundation, supported by the best user knowledge, and a strong focus on responsibility, i.e., on hunter safety and animal welfare.

The message the plan 2023-2024 wants to spread is how, as an organisation, NAMMCO commits to robust and responsible management.

NAMMCO commits to robust and responsible management through supporting and facilitating

- **high-quality independent scientific research projects**, which are essential in generating the knowledge required for a sound management
- **improved hunters' safety and animal welfare** by producing tools contributing to the training of the hunters

3.1 ANCHORS TO THE MESSAGE

3.1.1 High-quality independent scientific research projects

NAMMCO in 2023-2024 (and later years) will be supporting and facilitating two high profile projects: the **NASS 2024** running in 2023-2025 and the **MINTAG Project** running in 2022-2027. Both projects are coordinated through NAMMCO and financially supported both by the Commission and its member countries.

Both projects greatly contribute to bringing data and information essential to a thorough understanding of the species and stocks and their place in the Nordic marine ecosystem. They therefore contribute to an effective, robust, science-based, well-tuned management. Both projects, because of their importance for a sound management and as knowledge source, have the interest of several research groups worldwide outside the NAMMCO community.

The period 2023-2024 will focus on disseminating the development and the results of these two flag projects. Importantly, if NAMMCO facilitates research projects, the results and conclusion are acquired independently from the Commission.

NASS 2024 is the 7th edition of the North Atlantic Sightings Surveys of cetaceans, with its preparation in 2023, the survey in summer 2024 followed by the analysis in 2024 and 2025.

Besides informing on present summer population abundance, NASS 2024 continues a series of surveys initiated in 1987, thus providing population trends over a 37-year period. Such long population trends are invaluable for monitoring the status of the populations, and to follow changes in the species distribution related to the overall climate and environmental changes. This series is unique by its length and its geographic coverage and deserves to be exposed as such.

The **MINTAG project** aims at developing miniaturised satellite tags that can be used on lesser-known although exploited fast-swimming rorquals and pilot whales. Although these whales are common off NAMMCO countries in spring-summer, the wintering areas of the different stocks remain unknown. As a result, the species stocks structures, although knowledge essential to a sound management, are not well defined. The project has the interest of several research groups that acknowledge the benefit of developing such miniaturised tags, but do not have the means to do so. The project, which target under-studied species, will also represent a unique tagging effort by the novelty of the tag, its intensity, and its plurality, both in terms of target species and geographic focus area.

The 25 first prototypes of MINTAG should be deployed in summer 2023, and the first batch of new tags (ca. 100) in spring summer 2024, with the anticipated possibility of following the first movements of individual whales from spring-summer 2023 both in the North Atlantic and in the North Pacific.

3.1.2 Responsibility through training

The pursuit of responsible hunting has been targeted through the improvement of hunting methods according to three identified criteria: increased efficiency of the operations (e.g., not losing any struck animals), increased safety for the hunters, and minimised animal suffering.

NAMMCO is currently the only international organisation actively working towards improving marine mammal hunting methods. This work is therefore something that is unique to NAMMCO and an area in which NAMMCO has the world leading expertise.

NAMMCO has previously formulated recommendations on the best ways to improve Time to Death (TTD) and Instantaneous Death Rate (IDR) for large whales using harpoon guns with explosive grenades. In addition, all Workshops and Expert Group meetings have strongly emphasised the importance of training and experience in conducting a successful hunt. Indeed, the NAMMCO Committee for Hunting Methods

has repeatedly and consistently emphasized that training, experience, and transfer of knowledge are prerequisites to responsible hunting practices.

The period 2023 – 2024 will continue to focus on strengthening the safety for the hunters and on improving animal welfare for the animals with special focus on the production of instruction/training videos. The first in a series of such videos was produced in 2021-2022. A second video should be produced in 2022-2023, and the effort will continue in 2024.

3.2 FOCUS GROUP

External target audience in focus

- *Marine mammal scientists*
- *Journalists/Media working on arctic and environmental issues*
- *Youth, children and educators, member countries' educational networks*
- *NAMMCO wide community*

Generally, but not as a focus group for CP3, the wider public in Member Countries and elsewhere

The appropriateness of the communication channel depends on the target groups.

- Scientists will be likely better reach through the website, reporting in scientific conferences and publishing results in scientific journals
- Journalists and media maybe more accessible through Twitter and article in vulgarisation journals, as well as direct contact,
- Youth will be better reached through posts on Instagram
- The educational network will be better reached through direct contacts and developing the awareness of the educational material existing on the website

3.3 KEY COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

3.3.1 Website

nammco.org remains the most important information site and transparency channel of the organisation, internally as well as externally. It is the hub and umbrella of all communication activities, and the host of the NAMMCO archive, where all documents and material are made available.

Its continual update and improvement is therefore the utmost priority of the Secretariat, as well as made it as SEO friendly as possible.

3.3.2 Social Media (SoMe)

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are seen as fora for communicating with the wider NAMMCO community and attract new persons to this community. They are also fora that can channel audiences to the website, where new visitors can then hopefully appreciate the scope and range of information provided by nammco.org. An Instagram account will be created, as Instagram is reaching a younger and internationally wider public than Facebook, of which the use has become limited geographically and mostly used by middle and older generations. Instagram is therefore more suited than FB to wider NAMMCO wider community. The demographics of Twitter are the middle young generation (20 to 50 years old), but more important it is used by higher educated person and communication professionals.

SoMe should be used to reflect on activities in NAMMCO at all levels and represent NAMMCO-related national activities.

3.3.3 Educational sectors

Contact with educational sectors, starting with NAMMCO member countries, should be taken, or nurtured when existing, and the interest in and best tools for following the research projects on a longer

term investigated. If relevant, educational material could be created (including besides the species information, individual migration maps, focus quiz, etc.) and posted on the website for downloading.

Focussing on the education sector would be a new activity for NAMMCO, although it has previously been put forward as a possibility.

The MINTAG project, which includes funding for dissemination activities, could be a good starting point. As a several years project, it represents a unique educational material to develop pupils' and students' interest for the marine environment and its conservation and make them apprehend whaling and sealing in a global ecological perspective.

3.3.4 External outreach

External communication should be reinforced to increase the visibility of the Organisation and help conveying the message in focus.

Participation to high profile events, both scientific or connected to marine conservation and marine-related SDGs, should be attended. Participation should be accompanied to direct presentations, dialog events or manning of booth focussing on the NAMMCO CP 2023-2024 flag projects.

3.4 KEY ACTIONS

3.4.1 General - Website and SOME Focus 2023-2024

- 1) continue the practice of updating and using the website.
 - Use the information contained in the NPR to update on national activities
 - Generate blogs on the different projects, directly involving the participants
 - Update the species status pages with the conclusion of the SC and WG meetings
 - Generate more news
 - See under 3.4.2 for specific action on CP3 focus message
- 2) generalise the use of SOME by Secretariat's staff, continue regular and varied posting regarding the activity of NAMMCO and NAMMCO community on news, FB, use the same elements to increase posting on Twitter and initiating the use Instagram
 - All meetings of Council, committees, and subsidiary bodies, as well as any NAMMCO events, should be announced. For all meetings (except FAC's and HoD's) and events, there should be an announcement, a start story, and posts and photos during the meeting and a final post (with group pictures).
 - The release of any NAMMCO reports and publications shall continue be announced
 - Posts of wider interest should be boosted to increase the contact with new viewers and create the opportunity to increase the number of likes and followers.
 - National representatives were asked in the 2019-2020 plans to send post on national activities, also in their country's language, but this possibility has not been used. However, it would still be interesting for NAMMCO to exploit.
 - See under See under 3.4.2 for specific action on CP3 focus message

The developments of the MINTAG project, and individual whales' movements, as well as the progress of the NASS 2024 survey and its results should be used as much as possible on all SOME – see also below in specific key actions.

3.4.2 Specific - Disseminating CP3 message using flag projects

The dissemination around the three flag projects, NAMMCO wants to anchor the CP3 message on, can be delt with in similar ways, although the MINTAG project and NASS 2024 are probably better suited for dissemination to a larger and non-specialised audience.

The key actions should focus upon

- making the CP flag projects highly visible, thus widening the audience of NAMMCO. It should also attempt to
- building up audience loyalty.

They should spark off and stimulate in the public, and especially kids/young, the wish to follow the projects on a long-term and thereby continue using the nammco.org and the specific project sides.

Six actions are seen as essential:

- ✓ Create specific lively sites on nammco.org dedicated to each project
- ✓ Maintain general updates of these sites and use the news on the main site to announce updates on the specific site
- ✓ Maintain a high activity on the three SoMe through regular posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram related to the preparation and the developments of the projects, also during the analysis phase. Such post should redirect to the specific project website
- ✓ Create, if possible, page/links on Wikipedia connecting to the projects
- ✓ Creating web educational/dissemination material (information, play, quiz, podcasts, competition) to generate interest for the projects and that can be downloaded and used by schools/high schools to initiate a longer-term following of the projects.
- ✓ Use the two high profile projects, NASS 24 and MINTAG, in any outreach and dissemination effort.

More detailed and targeted communication plan should be developed for each project, including specific goals and objectives, success criteria and measurable output. The overall and the specific communication plans, and especially the stories told on the website, should follow the three-act structure (set-up, ascension to climax, pay-off) to maintain the attention of the audience.

Specific funding could be sought from Funds which have as vision of stimulating the public involvement in nature and conservation and especially that of the marine environment conservation.

Develop contact with whale watching companies and marine/science centres in FO, GL, IS and NO to report on the MINTAG project and NASS2024. Whale watching companies could be asked to report sightings of whales, especially if they see tagged whales. Cooperating with ferries and tourist charter boats could also be investigated to increase reported sightings and as dissemination platforms; flyers, posters, and interactive platforms could be used.

4. MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

The Vision of the COS (see under Point 2.1) is that *“NAMMCO is perceived as the pre-eminent and most effective forum for the conservation and management of marine mammals in the North Atlantic.”* One goal of the COS was for NAMMCO to reach a higher level of visibility, especially in NAMMCO countries. The success of the CP3 should therefore be measured against this vision and goal.

One way of measuring visibility is to analyse the flow of visitors on the main communication tool of NAMMCO, i.e., its website and looking whether the visitor profile evolves. In this case one of the targets for the CP3 is *“Youth, children and educators, member countries’ educational networks”*. This may be measured by examining the age profile of the visitors and examining whether it changes during the two-year period, using the analytical tools provided.

Similarly, the number and profile of the visitors and interactions on the SoMe will also provide some measurement on the success of the outreach.

If educational material is produced and placed on the website, then examining the use of the different website pages will give an idea whether the material is used. The number of interactions with educational institutions will also give an idea of the outreach.

Invitation to present at conferences and events and give lecture in the education sectors can also demonstrate the effectiveness of CP3 in increasing the awareness to the plans three flag projects and to NAMMCO and its action in general.

Evaluation the success of the communication should be done regularly to allow for tuning and tweaking the plans to the reality encountered.

5. FOCUS AREAS 2023-2024 IN A NUTSHELL

Message: - NAMMCO commits to robust and responsible management through supporting and facilitating

1) high-quality independent scientific research projects

2) improved hunter safety and animal welfare

Actions: - Get the message across & increase the visibility of NAMMCO through 6 main actions

- ✓ For each of the three flag projects
 - **Developing a specific communication plan, with the goal of building up audience loyalty and interest in following the progress of the projects**
 - **Developing a specific project site on the NAMMCO website**
 - **Posting regular information on the development, implementation, and results of the projects on the main & specific website and on the SoMe**

In general

- ✓ **Make the press aware of the uniqueness of the projects by using twitter and contacting the media in members countries**
- ✓ **Use the three projects in any outreach and dissemination events**
- ✓ **Raise awareness of the educational sector to the projects, and develop educational material to be downloadable form the website if interest is there**

6. OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES IN 2023-2024

Media	Action	Resources	Results intended
nammco.org	Review and update all information every year Increase effort on SEO Develop specific sites for the different flag projects	- Secretariat - NPR - Input from projects participants - Inputs from NAMMCO community on national activities and debates	Reinforce nammco.org as a hub for NAMMCO outreach Increased information and knowledge given to the wider public and thereby enhanced credibility and understanding
Blog	Generate more blog posts, especially on the flag projects, their development, and results	- Secretariat - Open to project participants - Open to community - Open to outsiders	More traffic to website and to FB. NAMMCO's perspective in/on global conservation issues shared and known Blogs should be announced on FB and twitter
SoMe	Regularise the practice of posting NAMMCO specific post and project update (find a suitable rhythm). Continue FFF (Fun Fact Friday) practice	- Secretariat - Open to community	Regular information flow to the NAMMCO community Connection with those beyond the current community Enhanced traffic to the website
Facebook			
Twitter	Increase the practice with reference to the CP flag projects.	- Secretariat	Be more visible in Twitter community and increase number of followers
Instagram	Develop the use of Instagram	- Secretariat	Reaching out more widely the younger public
Leaflets	Produce 1-2 leaflets on the CP flag projects	- Secretariat	Hand-outs available. for contacts made during events

			Educational resource that can be shared with others
One-page summary	One-page summary/FB post for all meetings within 48 hrs of end	- Secretariat - Chairs	Increased internal information Provide material for nammco.org and SoMe
Fieldwork plans	Fieldwork plans delivered in May by NAMMCO scientific community	- SC members	
Field work & project results	Blogs, results, publications provided a.s.a.p	- Project participants	
High profile events	Attending events. Making presentations or manning a booth, illustrating the progress in the three flag projects	- Secretariat - Parties	Spread the message Increasing the visibility of NAMMCO and its credibility
Implementation review	Review the implementation at the end of 2023 and tuned for 2024	- Secretariat - NAMMCO Community	Tuning of effort to obtain a better adequation between results and goals