



NAMMCO ANNUAL MEETING 31

19-21 March 2024

Hotel Reykjavík Grand, Reykjavík, Iceland

JOINT MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

DOCUMENT 07	Progress of the Working Group on Enhancing User Involvement in NAMMCO Decision Making (UIWG)
Submitted by	UIWG / Secretariat
Action requested	To take note To designate a Chair To advise on how to move forward with the WG
Background/content	Acknowledging the importance of including diverse knowledge systems beyond western scientific knowledge in the management processes, the NAMMCO Council 29 (2022) endorsed the recommendation by the management committee to create a specialised working group to improve stakeholder involvement. The Terms of Reference (ToR) were presented and refined during the Council 30 (March 2023). The working group held three meetings, first in June 2023, second in January 2024 and third in March 2024. The progress and importance of the UIWG was presented to the SC30 in January 2024.

1. First UIWG – June 2023

1.1 Summary of the meeting

The first meeting of the UIWG was held online on 22 June 2023. The list of participants is included in Appendix 1.

The meeting was called to formally establish the UIWG and to introduce the current members, appointed by the member countries. The Working Group's (WG) overall objective was presented to all the participants in the meeting; this was, how to best address the imbalance that seemed to be between western scientific information and information derived from various stakeholders were used in assessment and management approaches for marine mammals in the NAMMCO context.

Key points of the discussion included defining the group's specific aims, expanding membership to include various stakeholders, using the term 'stakeholder' instead of 'user,' and planning for the next meeting in the fall to select leadership and discuss additional members.

2. Second UIWG – January 2024

2.1 Summary of the meeting

The second meeting of the UIWG was held on the 15th of January 2024 and was chaired by John-André Henden. The list of participants is included in Appendix 1.

Overall, all the members of the WG highlighted the importance of establishing such a WG. Several members of the group emphasized the importance of integrating user knowledge throughout the entire process of generating advice, and the group discussion revolved around discussing the form, timing, and methodology for conducting such process at NAMMCO.

The group **agreed** that the user involvement process should be species-specific, and if necessary, country specific. The working procedure of the group will be kept flexible to adapt to such specificity.

The UIWG was proposed to be a standing working group with permanent membership, open to adding new members if relevant. The WG suggested a workplan during the second UIWG (see more details in the second report of the UIWG), although this was rediscussed on the third meeting where the participants decided it was too early to create such a workplan.

The group discussed that the UIWG should be open to incorporating new members with diverse views and competencies as needed and that it is beneficial for the WG to have "outside" experiences. The Chair of KNAPK, Nikkulaat Jeremiassen, was nominated to be part of this WG, not only because he is a hunter but also because of Jeremiassen's experience in management of species and political work.

Finally, the WG discussed whether there was a need to develop a formal proposal for the Council to change the name from "User Involvement Working Group" to "Stakeholder Involvement Working Group", as suggested in the first UIWG meeting. While some members argued that the group's name should not be restrictive to different types of participants and that a broad term like "stakeholder" puts everyone on the same level for initiating discussions, other members emphasised the importance of focusing the name of the WG specifically on users, as users are the ones with less involvement currently in the advice-generating process at NAMMCO. In the lack of strong support to change the name of the group and strong arguments against changing the name of the group, the group decided to not bring a proposal for the name changing forward.

3. Presentation of the UIWG to the SC30

During the SC30, John-André Henden, chair of the second meeting of the UIWG and member of the SC, presented his experience on incorporating user knowledge in a scientific advisory process.

The SC welcomes any knowledge that can improve the assessments of stocks, while noting that the process of involving users throughout the entire scientific and advice-generating process is logistically challenging, expensive, and time-consuming, and that success is not always guaranteed. The SC also recognised that, where financial interests play a major role, it may not be possible to bring forward a successful user involvement process.

4. Third UIWG – March 2024

4.1 Summary of the meeting

The third meeting of the UIWG was held on the 1st of March 2024. In the absence of a Chair of the UIWG, Desportes chaired the meeting. The list of participants is included in Appendix 1.

During this meeting, the WG was presented with three projects that work with user involvement, either in the collection of data or throughout the scientific and managerial process to learn about existing initiative and best practices. As agreed in the previous meeting, the NAMMCO Secretariat presented to the group the upcoming species assessments in NAMMCO suggested at the SC30, for the group to develop a tentative plan.

The UIWG participants **agreed** that a tentative workplan could not be made yet, as the UIWG needs to discuss further the workflow, organisation, and structure of the group before outlining a comprehensive workplan.

As a way forward, the WG **agreed** that they needed more time to decide what would be the best way of enhancing user involvement in NAMMCO decision making, and how the group should work. The WG **agreed** to conduct shorter but more regular meetings, each focusing on a specific topic.

The WG agreed that the next meeting should take place before the summer of 2024, with the proposed theme centred around discussing how and in what ways user involvement can contribute to improving the overall decision-making process.

Appendix 1: List of Participants at the Working Group on Enhancing User Involvement in NAMMCO Decision Making meetings

First meeting – June 2023	Second meeting – January 2024	Third meeting – March 2024
<p>Bjarne Pettersen, Norwegian whaler</p> <p>John-André Henden, scientist, Marine Research Institute (NO, Chair of the meeting)</p> <p>Masaana Dorph, manager, Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting (GL)</p> <p>Mikael Pettersen, hunter representative, The Association of Fishers and Hunters in Greenland (KNAPK)</p> <p>Sandra Granquist, scientist, Marine and Freshwater Research Institute (IS)</p> <p>Simen Five, Norwegian sealer</p> <p>Ulla Svarrer Wang, manager, Ministry of Fisheries and Infrastructure (FO)</p> <p>Charlotte Winsnes, NAMMCO Secretariat</p>	<p>Arne Bjørge, scientist, Institute of Marine Research*</p> <p>Bjarne Pettersen, Norwegian whaler</p> <p>Finn Danielsen, scientist, NORDECO*</p> <p>John-André Henden, scientist, Marine Research Institute (NO, Chair of the meeting)</p> <p>Martin Biuw, scientist, Institute of Marine Research*</p> <p>Martin Enghoff, scientist, NORDECO*</p> <p>Masaana Dorph, manager, Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting (GL)</p> <p>Mikael Pettersen, hunter representative, The Association of Fishers and Hunters in Greenland (KNAPK)</p> <p>Sandra Granquist, scientist, Marine and Freshwater Research Institute (IS)</p> <p>Simen Five, Norwegian sealer</p> <p>Ulla Svarrer Wang, manager, Ministry of Fisheries and Infrastructure (FO)</p> <p>Geneviève Desportes, NAMMCO Secretariat</p> <p>Maria Garagouni, NAMMCO Secretariat</p> <p>Naima El bani Altuna, NAMMCO Secretariat</p>	<p>Amalie Jessen, manager, Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting (GL)</p> <p>Bjarne Pettersen, Norwegian whaler</p> <p>John-André Henden, scientist, Marine Research Institute (NO)</p> <p>Masaana Dorph, manager, Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting (GL)</p> <p>Mikael Pettersen, hunter representative, The Association of Fishers and Hunters in Greenland (KNAPK)</p> <p>Sandra Granquist, scientist, Marine and Freshwater Research Institute (IS)</p> <p>Sofie Abelsen, manager, Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting (GL)</p> <p>Patricia Ella Husmann, student, Governance and Entrepreneurship in Northern and Indigenous Areas*</p> <p>Ulla Svarrer Wang, manager, Ministry of Fisheries and Infrastructure (FO)</p> <p>Vittus Qujaukitsoq, hunter representative, The Association of Fishers and Hunters in Greenland (KNAPK)</p> <p>Geneviève Desportes, NAMMCO Secretariat</p> <p>Maria Garagouni, NAMMCO Secretariat</p> <p>Naima El bani Altuna, NAMMCO Secretariat</p>

Participants marked with a star (*) were invited to the meeting but are not formal members of the UIWG