



## NAMMCO ANNUAL MEETING 31

*19–21 March 2024*

*Hotel Reykjavík Grand, Reykjavík, Iceland*

## MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

<b>DOCUMENT 10</b>	<b>REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INSPECTION AND OBSERVATION (CIO)</b>
<b>Submitted by</b>	CIO / Secretariat
<b>Action requested</b>	To take note of the report To consider the proposed work plan
<b>Background/content</b>	

## 1. MEETINGS AND MEMBERS APRIL 2023 – MARCH 2024

The Committee on Inspection and Observation (CIO) met once on the period from April 2023 to March 2024. The meeting was held online on 22 February 2024. The CIO was chaired by Ulla S. Wang (Faroe Islands). Regrettably Greenland did not participate in the meeting but gave written comments on the proposals and recommendations agreed upon during the meeting.

Committee members:

- FO: Ulla Svarrer Wang (Chair)
- GL: Amalie Jessen, Niels Lyberth
- IS: Jóhann Ásmundsson
- NO: Guro Gjelsvik

Secretariat: El bani Altuna, Desportes

## 2. REVIEW OF BACKGROUND AND STATUS OF CIO PER JULY 2023

The CIO **agreed** that the CIO background and status as per July 2023 prepared by Winsnes and Desportes (July 2023) was comprehensive and informative and presented a good overview of the work of the CIO.

This document will be complemented with the overview of Past Observation Activities and Past Hunts and Hunts Observed as appendices and made publicly available on the NAMMCO site.

## 3. OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES

### 3.1. OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES IN 2023 AND LESSONS LEARNED

The CIO discussed the observation activities (OA) conducted in 2023 in Greenland and will further discuss it in the next meeting when Greenland is present.

The two observers did not observe any hunts during the observation period and highlighted a significant challenge in the execution of the OA related to communication with hunters and a lack of trust toward the observers, as well as weather conditions. The Observers' reports point to a problem of information to the hunters on the reason for the NAMMCO observation, which lead to a problem of trust to the observers and a lack of cooperation.

The CIO **agreed** that there is a need for information dissemination to explain to the hunters and the local community the rationale behind the observation scheme.

It is essential to communicate why this initiative is advantageous for both the hunters and the broader context of marine mammal hunting, in addition to using this as an opportunity to shed light on the broader work of NAMMCO for a more comprehensive understanding.

### 3.2. FUTURE OF OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Based on the experience from the OA in 2023, the CIO acknowledged the need for improved communication with hunters to facilitate future OA. This involves emphasising not only their responsibility but also highlighting the benefits of the NAMMCO Observation Scheme.

The CIO **agreed** to establish an information 'campaign' ahead of any future OA, aiming to overcome communication barriers and reduce mistrust among hunters.

To achieve this, the CIO should use existing platforms such as national whaling/sealing associations and hunters' courses to better inform the hunters of the goals of the OA (i.e., to oversee the hunting

activities and promote transparency). This proactive approach would aim at enhancing understanding and cooperation, contributing to a more successful and trusted implementation of future OA.

The CIO **agreed** to carry out consultations with all relevant parties, including observers, hunters, and the locally involved authorities. The objective is to understand how each party envisions successful OA, what are the needs and how the current format of the OA should be improved.

The CIO discussed the effectiveness of the current format for OA and explored alternative approaches to enhance cost efficiency. Acknowledging budget constraints, the CIO recognised that the current format of OA may not be the most cost-effective, especially given the opportunistic nature of hunts in most countries and the heavy role of the weather conditions.

The CIO therefore explored alternatives to make the OAs more cost efficient and **recommended**:

- To reduce the regularity of the OA
- To allow national/local observers
- To examine whether using new observation methods (e.g., drones), could be also enhance the cost efficiency and allow to increase the observation effort.

The CIO also **agreed** that the overall results of the OA should be made more transparent and accessible on the website, instead of constituting only a few lines in the Reports of the Council. An updated overview of the results, compiling all the years, should be made easily available.

### 3.3. SCOPE AND RANGE OF OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES IN 2025

The CIO **agreed to recommend** the re-allocation of the available funds for 2025 to 2026, fundings are combined, with the goal of conducting more comprehensive OA in 2026.

### 3.4. PLANS FOR OBSERVATION ACTIVITY IN 2026

Based on the rationale behind the 2023 OA in Greenland (i.e., addressing the absence of OA for beluga, narwhals, and walrus) and given the lack of success of OA in 2023, the CIO **recommended** directing the OA efforts in Greenland for the same hunts for the year 2026.

## 4. OBSERVERS' ANNUAL INFORMATION MEETING

### 4.1. UPDATE AND COMMENTS ON THE MAY 2023 MEETING

The meeting with the observers was conducted with the aim of keeping those who participated in the observer course engaged and interested in the overall process. One of the observers proposed the idea of organising a follow-up meeting with the CIO to share their experiences with the committee.

Recognising the value of the feedback from the observers, the CIO **agreed** that getting insights from the observers on how the OA should be conducted could be very useful in improving the effectiveness of the OS and **recommended** that regular (annual) meetings be organised with the Observers.

## 5. PROPOSED WORKPLAN 2024-2026

<b>Month or Season, Year</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Description/Goal</b>
Spring to Autumn 2024	Developing a communication plan and communication material	CIO/Secretariat	To work on a communication plan to better convey the goals and benefits of the OA to the hunters
May/June, 2024	CIO meeting	CIO/Secretariat	To discuss a communication plan & reviewing member Countries' 2023 data
May/June, 2024	Meeting with observers	CIO/Secretariat Observers	To discuss OA and if anything could be improved
November/December, 2024	Participating to the meeting of the Norwegian Small Whalers Association	Member(s) of the CIO/Secretariat	To present and discuss the Observation Scheme to the whalers in Norway
2025	Define the plan for the OS in 2026	CIO/Secretariat	Refining the plan developed for 2023, and making sure that the logistic will be there. Reviewing member Countries' 2024 data
March 2025	Participating to the meeting of the Faroese Pilot Whaling Association	Member(s) of the CIO/Secretariat	To present and discuss the Observation Scheme with the whalers IN Faroes
May/June, 2025	Meeting with observers	CIO, Observers	Keeping contact and discuss relevant issues
2024/2025	Meeting with KNAPK (GL)?	Member(s) of the CIO/Secretariat	To present and discuss the Observation Scheme with the whalers in Greenland
2024/2025	Meeting with IS whalers/sealers	Member(s) of the CIO/Secretariat	To present and discuss the Observation Scheme with the hunters in Iceland
2026	Meeting with observers	CIO/Secretariat, Observers	Keeping contact and discuss relevant issues
Spring 2026	CIO meeting	CIO/Secretariat	Reviewing observers' report & member Countries' 2025 data