

NAMMCO MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, COUNCIL 32

WORKING GROUP ON ENHANCING USER INVOLVEMENT IN NAMMCO DECISION MAKING (UIWG)

25 June 2024, online, 12:00 CEST

The NAMMCO Working Group on Enhancing User Involvement in NAMMCO Decision Making (UIWG) held a third online meeting on June 25, 2024. The meeting was chaired by Acting Chair Geneviève Desportes. The meeting agenda and list of participants are available in Appendix 1 and 2, respectively. Naima El bani Altuna was appointed as primary rapporteur of the meeting.

Desportes welcomed the participants and briefly introduced the invited speakers, Anatole Danto (University of Brest, FR, Tartu Ülikool, EE, and Inalco, FR) and Tanguy Sandré (University of Paris Saclay, FR, and University of Bergen, NO).

1. CASE STUDY FOR SUCCESSFUL USER INVOLVEMENT

The Working Group (WG) was presented with two project examples of successful user involvement in wildlife management in the North Atlantic by Danto.

Summary:

Two French case studies of the implementation of management based (among others) on locally held environmental knowledge were first presented. The first concerns the traditional Atlantic salmon fishery in the Bay of Mont-Saint-Michel, the second the management of waterfowl hunting within the Loire estuary. It emerges in particular: a shared or non-shared observation about the resource; a policy work in progress to limit the use of environment; an involvement of natural scientists; new management systems opened, based on kind of « adaptive co-management ».

These examples make it possible to determine some invariants of "good success" of this implementation: envisage a long-term policy of mutual learning and discovery. Agree on small objectives, then move forward. Regular meetings, face-to-face, and in the field (on the boat, at sea, in port, but also... at the university, in the laboratory, at the counting station, etc.), to understand how others live, work, think... Each party agrees to treat the others as equals. The data produced and required are considered neutrally, at their fair value. There is no a priori distinction between LEK/TEK and western sciences knowledge. Everyone accepts that other people's categories are not the same, and do not cover the same definitions and boundaries as their own. Think about using the past to evaluate a common baseline. Help from people external to the subject throughout the process, and rely on translators and facilitators, who will help build bridges (social sciences, arts, analysis of past times, desirable futures, etc.).

Recommendations by presenter: Think to build a "state of the art" of the topic at a North Atlantic/Arctic level. Write a comparative analysis of the frameworks in progress (internet platforms, research projects, ...). Evaluate how to build a kind of similar framework to work together. Ask to a neutral institution to do this (university abroad, ...). It is also recommended, for the future of the WG, to find a leader (chair) able to lead the discussions/rely on translators and facilitators (social sciences). A first collective work could also be undertaken: sharing literature and examples of projects on these topics; list the existing knowledge and data in each of the categories (western sciences/local stakeholders), compare them, evaluate the gaps that still exist; construct a minimum collection sheet for missing data; think about a co-constructed holistic database; think now what the data collected will be used for in concrete terms, evaluate the purposes and objectives.

2. PROPOSALS FOR USER INVOLVEMENT IN NAMMCO

Sandr  presented a proposal for enhancing user involvement in NAMMCO, based on a recently published study by him and co-authors (UIWG/2024-03/03; Sandr  et al., 2024):

Summary:

The paper by Sandr  et al. (2024) is grounded in people’s experience – not only hunters – living in Ittoqqortoormiit. In his presentation, he explained that the focus on narwhal preservation was brought by the local community to the research team. The research shows that the legitimacy (understood as: the inclusion of diverging values and beliefs) and credibility (understood as: adequation with Indigenous knowledge and concerns) of the scientific evidence and species management are contested in Ittoqqortoormiit. The research assessed a situation in which the status of some knowledge holders (i.e. local communities) is denied or downgraded (epistemic injustice). The study also underlined that indigenous food systems are not only about meat supply, and therefore that an approach based on substitution of narwhal as food sources by an alternative food source is not sufficient. Moreover, the study showed that every community members have concerns toward narwhal, not only hunters for whom it is also an important income. Among the principles that were mentioned to address the situation, following the Inuit Circumpolar Council’s Guidelines, Sandr  emphasized that Indigenous knowledge “must not be translated, integrated into, or validated by science”. Finally, Sandr  proposed some directions that could be followed by NAMMCO: 1) supporting community-led knowledge production projects; 2) assessing social, economic and cultural impacts aspects through the inclusion of Indigenous people and social scientist within the SCs; 3) anchoring management processes in local communities, e.g. “the ad hoc Narwhals in East Greenland Working Group (NEGWG)” could be held in the impacted communities in Tasiilaq and Ittoqqortoormiit.

3. MOVING FORWARD

Based on the case studies presented in Items 1 and 2, and document UIWG/2024-03/04 (NAMMCO/28/MC/07 (2021); actions copied in Appendix 3), the group discussed specific actions that NAMMCO could be proposed to take for enhancing user involvement. Below is a list of discussed actions:

- Adding “User knowledge” as a standing item in the agenda of SC working groups. Adding “User Knowledge” as a standing item on the agenda of the Scientific Committee’s working groups. Similar to the existing standing item “Other (than removals) anthropogenic stressors,” the UIWG could recommend that all working groups of the scientific committee include a standing agenda item for “User Knowledge”, so the scientists become aware of what exists and discuss how to incorporate that information in the assessment.
- Supporting the development a system/tool to document non-hunting related observations. National hunting regulations often include reporting obligations for hunters, requiring them to take samples and/or biological data (e.g., sex, size, weight) to the authorities. However, other observations outside of hunting activities are typically not reported with quantifiable data and visual evidence, relying instead on oral communication. To overcome disagreements in the observational data by users and scientists, and learn which kind of knowledge (e.g., qualitative/quantitative presence and abundance data) each stakeholder holds, the group discussed the possibility of developing a common system or tool to document these observations. The system for collecting observational data should be done in a structured manner and should remain realistic. The group recognise the difficulty of creating a “universal” system that would adapt to the specificities of the NAMMCO member Countries (e.g., with different regulations, different concept of “users”) and hunts (e.g., different animals being hunted, different methods),

but agreed that the system could be general and flexible enough to adapt to all. **The next meeting of the UIWG should focus on further discussing this idea, including examining existing tools (some listed in Appendix 4), understanding the framework for each tool, comparing them, and assessing their usefulness in the NAMMCO context. A systematic review of the already developed tools might be relevant.**

- Preparing a list of relevant literature. To begin collating existing work on including user knowledge in management processes in NAMMCO member countries, the group found useful to compile a list of literature on user involvement initiatives in each countries. The Secretariat would start the list with the initiatives it knows about, then it would be circulated to the Parties, that would complete it.
- Broadening the expertise in the UIWG. The participants of the UIWG meeting acknowledged that while the group possesses broad expertise, there may be a need to include permanent members with practical experience in user involvement in research and management. These new members should have hands-on experience or a background in social sciences that would allow them (1) to interpret user knowledge (such as that collated through the system discussed above) and (2) to account for the economic, social, and cultural value of marine mammals for users. This expertise is necessary to assess how observational data can be utilised (see the point above) and facilitate the information flow between users and natural scientists.
- How to increase the involvement of social scientists at NAMMCO's species assessments. The question arose whether NAMMCO needs a separate social science committee or if both social scientists and natural scientists should share the same forum to be able to interpret user knowledge in species assessments. The group discussed that, ideally, knowledge holders, natural scientists, and social scientists should share the same space. However, external mediation may be required to avoid power imbalances and hierarchy issues in the conversation.
- Preparation of a list of actions by the UIWG that could be taken by NAMMCO to enhance user involvement to be presented at the next meeting of the Management Committee. A few were already proposed at this meeting:
 - All working groups of the Scientific Committee include a standing agenda item for discussing "User Knowledge"
 - Enhancing information sharing with Users' Organisation and Users by:
 - Establishing a list of relevant and interested user organisations from each of the member countries and commit to notifying these organisations of the workplans of NAMMCO committees, including Terms of Reference of upcoming WGs/Expert Groups (EG) and agree with these organisations on information sharing
 - Support the further development and use of programs, technologies and databases for collecting and structuring local observations in a way that can be easily shared with those conducting assessments.
 - Create Opportunities and spaces such as events and dialog fora, for Users, Scientists, and Managers to meet, exchange information and become more familiar with each other.
 - Facilitating greater User Engagement in existing NAMMCO Committees and Working Groups
 - Specifically call for input from users/user organisations before all WG/EG meetings.
 - Ask Member Countries to nominate at least one user/local knowledge representative to the Committee on Hunting Methods.
 - Modifying the text of NAMMCO Principle 5 for integrating a precautionary approach. The sentence "*Management decisions should be based on the best available science, which **may** include hunter and user data and observation*" should be changed to "*Management decisions should be based on the best available science, which **should** include hunter and user data and observation*".



4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members of the group expressed concern that the UIWG is stuck and not making any effective progress. They suggested that, before moving on to any other tasks, the group should clarify its goals, identify what is missing, and determine its focus areas.

Sandra Granquist informed the group that during her leave of absence until winter 2025 Jón Þrándur Stefánsson will take her place.

The next meeting will take place in August or September. A doodle will be circulated by email to decide on the date.

The report was **adopted** by correspondence on 4th July, 2024.



APPENDIX 1: AGENDA

- 1. CASE STUDY FOR SUCCESSFUL USER INVOLVEMENT**
- 2. PROPOSALS FOR USER INVOLVEMENT IN NAMMCO**
- 3. MOVING FORWARD**
- 4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT LIST

Amalie Jessen (GL)

Manager
Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting
amalie@nanoq.gl

Anatole Danto (Invited participant)

Scientist
University of Brest / Tartu Ülikool / Inalco
anatole.danto@orange.fr

Bjarne Pettersen

Norwegian Whaler
bjapett@hotmail.com

Geneviève Desportes (Acting Chair)

NAMMCO Secretariat
geneviève@nammco.org

Masaana Dorph (GL)

Manager
Ministry of Fisheries and Hunting
mado@nanoq.gl

Mikael Pettersen

Hunter representative
The Association of Fishers and Hunters in
Greenland (KNAPK)
mipe@knapk.gl

Naima El bani Altuna

NAMMCO Secretariat
naima@nammco.org

Nikkulat Jeremiassen (GL)

Hunter representative
The Association of Fishers and Hunters in
Greenland (KNAPK)
nikkulaat@knapk.gl

Nuka Møller

Interpreter
The Association of Fishers and Hunters in
Greenland (KNAPK)
nukamoeller@gmail.com

Sandra Granquist (IS)

Scientist
Icelandic Marine and Freshwater Research
Institute
sandra.magdalenagranquist@hafogvatn.is

Tanguy Sandré (Invited participant)

Scientist
University of Paris Saclay / University of
Bergen
tanguy.sandre@uvsq.fr

APPENDIX 3: ACTIONS RECOMMENDED IN DOCUMENT NAMMCO/28/MC/07

A SPECTRUM OF POSSIBLE APPROACHES FOR STRENGTHENING USER KNOWLEDGE INVOLVEMENT IN NAMMCO

There are various ways in which NAMMCO could strengthen the involvement of user knowledge in its advisory and decision-making processes. These span a wide spectrum of possible actions from those that are relatively simple, small and easy to implement, to those that are ambitious and require significant changes and/or investment of resources. The organisation may see some of these possible actions as relevant and valuable to pursue, but not others. Selecting which of the various possible pathways forward may be appropriate for NAMMCO to further consider and possibly pursue will depend on what value is placed on user knowledge, how the current challenges and limitations of the organisation's work on this matter are understood, and where it is believed value may be added through strengthened inclusion. In this background document, no selection or prioritisation of the identified possible pathways forward is given. Rather they are simply presented as a spectrum of many possible approaches that the organisation may wish to consider. Given the wide spectrum of possibilities available, the MCJ is invited to indicate which of these may be worth further investigation.

The Secretariat and/or other NAMMCO Committees could then further explicate any option deemed worthy of a more detailed investigation, proposal or cost planning.

Enhance Information Sharing

This represents the lowest level of action NAMMCO could take to further strengthen the involvement of user knowledge in its advisory and decision-making processes and includes actions such as:

- *Establish a list of relevant and interested user organisations from each of the member countries and commit to notifying these organisations of the workplans of all NAMMCO committees.*
- *Develop MoUs with the relevant organisations to agree on information sharing practices and timelines.*
- *Support the further development and use of programs, technologies and databases for collecting and structuring local observations in a way that can be easily shared with those conducting assessments.*

Create Opportunities, Events and Spaces for Users, Scientists, and Managers to Meet

Creating new opportunities, spaces and events in which managers, scientists and users can meet is important for them to be able to exchange knowledge but also to become more familiar with each other's views/needs/realities/interests. It would be important that there be a commitment to support these spaces or host such meetings over an extended period of time (to really allow for the building of familiarity, trust and understanding). It may also be important that they rotate in location and form to highlight the different realities and working modes of the actor groups, and perhaps that they are also guided by professional facilitators. Action along these lines could take forms such as:

- *Commit to carrying out Community Consultations in which managers and scientists meet and hear from users in their local contexts.*
- *Host a series of Dialogue Forums in which managers, scientists and users meet several times over an agreed period to build familiarity, understanding and trust.*

- *Hold Vision Workshops to establish shared interests, goals and plans.*

Facilitate Greater User Engagement in Existing NAMMCO Committees and Working Groups

There are a number of ways in which users could be invited to participate more directly in existing NAMMCO Committees and Working Group (WG) processes. These include:

- *Specifically call for input from users/user organisations before all WG meetings.*
- *Insist that user knowledge be included as an agenda item/point to be considered in all WG meetings.*
- *Encourage user organisations to participate as observers in all SC meetings.*
- *Allow users to be active and invited participants in WG, SC, and/or Committee meetings.*
- *Ask Member Countries to nominate at least one user/local knowledge representative to the Committee on Hunting Methods.*
- *Require that Member Countries always include at least one user/local knowledge participant in their national delegations.*

Strengthen Research Collaborations between Scientists & Users

While scientists and users have some interaction through research projects carried out by the national research institutes, this could arguably be expanded through actions such as the following:

- *Create opportunities for users to be actively engaged in data collection and monitoring practices and ensure that the necessary training and/or financial compensation for time used is available.*
- *Host collaborative workshops to develop a shared set of research questions relevant for management.*
- *Develop joint research projects in which users are involved in all aspects, including setting the research question, defining the methods of investigation, collecting data, and analysing results.*

Establish Committees to Collate User Knowledge and Assess Socio-economic Impacts

NAMMCO has previously had an active user knowledge working group, however, there has never been any official part of the organisation dedicated to assessing socio-economic impacts to inform the advisory process. Therefore, some options for action in this regard would be to:

- *Re-establish the User Knowledge Working Group with participation from relevant user organisations from all Member Countries.*
- *Establish a Social Science Committee (SSC) to formally assess social, economic and cultural impacts, and aspects of social and economic sustainability relevant to marine mammal management.*
- *Expand the concept of science used in the organisation to one more representative of “vitenskap” or “wissenschaft” in which the social sciences are included in what is defined as science, thereby opening the possibility that the Scientific Committee could include members and invited experts from fields of social science.*

Work Towards Models for Developing Holistic and Integrative Assessments and Advice

While it would be valuable to establish avenues for user knowledge and socio-economic impacts to be included in NAMMCO's advisory process, the ultimate aim could also be to ensure that there are not different recommendations for management measures coming from various separate and free-standing committees within the organisation, but rather that natural science, social science and user knowledge - environmental, socio-economic and

cultural impacts - are all considered together and integrated in the generation of management advice from NAMMCO. This could take place in a number of different ways, such as:

- *Have a timeline in which issues are sequentially handled by different committees/working groups in a way that leads to the generation of an integrated assessment and advice - e.g., user knowledge is collated first and fed into a scientific assessment, which is then considered and layered with a socio-economic evaluation of the recommendations.*
- *Create an integrative panel with responsibility to consider recommendations from different actor groups and write a synthesis report with management advice that integrates all aspects of an assessment.*
- *Establish a Joint Assessment Committee in which scientists, social scientists and users work together to perform holistic assessments and generate commonly agreed measures for conservation and management.*

APPENDIX 4: LIST OF (SOME) EXISTING TOOLS TO COLLATE USER KNOWLEDGE IN THE ARCTIC

- ELOKA: Exchange for Local Observations and Knowledge of the Arctic – <https://eloka-arctic.org/>
- Snowchange Cooperative – <https://www.snowchange.org/>
- SIKU - The Indigenous Knowledge Social Network – <https://siku.org/>
- Alaska Arctic Observatory and Knowledge Hub – <https://arctic-aok.org/>
- Faroe Islands Climate Events Database – <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/c11a2e9cd2b94ba79ef03fae138783fb?item=2>
- Arctic Seas – <https://www.arcticseas.org/>