



COMMITTEE ON INSPECTION AND OBSERVATION

21 May 2026

Online

NAMMCO/CIO/2026-02

REPORT



© Cover photo: H.P. Tysnes

DISCLAIMER:

The content of this report contains the views of the Committee and does not necessarily represent the views of the NAMMCO Council.

Cite this report as: NAMMCO (2026). *Report of Committee on Inspection and Observation* (NAMMCO/CIO/2026-02). NAMMCO-North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission. Tromsø, Norway. 9 pp. <https://nammco.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/cio-2026-02.pdf>

All reports of the Committee on Inspection and Observation are available at <https://nammco.no/committee-on-inspection-and-observation-reports/>

Chair

Guro Gjelsvik

Rapporteur

Naima El bani Altuna

Authors

Jóhann Ásmundsson, Geneviève Desportes, Naima El bani Altuna, Guro Gjelsvik, Ulla S. Wang

North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

Postbox 6400, N-9294; Visitors: Sykehusveien 21-23, N-9294; Tromsø, Norway

nammco-sec@nammco.org | www.nammco.org



1	Adoption of agenda and review of documents	1
2	Methodology to identify upcoming Observation Activities	1
3	Implementation of the Observation Scheme	2
3.1	Consideration of checklists used by national inspectors	2
4	NAMMCO Observer Corps	2
4.1	Annual Information Meeting.....	2
4.2	Observer Corps Training	2
5	Observation Activities	3
5.1	Status update on the Observation Activities in Norway in 2026	3
5.2	Status update on the OA in West Greenland in 2027	3
6	Communication with hunter associations.....	3
7	Any other business.....	3
	APPENDIX 1: Agenda	4
	Appendix 2: List of documents	5
	APPENDIX 3: Participant list.....	6

Abbreviations

CHM: Committee on Hunting Methods
 CIO: Committee on Inspection and Observation
 OA: Observation Activity

The Committee on Inspection and Observation (CIO) met online 21 May 2026 from 13:00 to 14:30 CEST. The CIO meeting was chaired by Guro Gjelsvik (Norway). The meeting agenda, list of documents and list of participants are available in Appendix 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

1 ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS

Gjelsvik welcomed the participants to the meeting. Deputy Secretary Naima El bani Altuna was appointed as rapporteur.

The Chair presented the agenda (Appendix 1) and the meeting documents (Appendix 2). The agenda was adopted without modification. Gjelsvik informed that the adopted workplan for the CIO for the 2026-2028 time period was presented in CIO/2026-02/02.

2 METHODOLOGY TO IDENTIFY UPCOMING OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES

In the 2025-2026 period, the CIO continued developing a systematic, objective approach to prioritising which hunts should be observed under the Observation Activities (OAs). Geneviève Desportes presented a proposal for prioritising OAs, outlining the criteria and methodology applied (documents CIO/2026-02/03a and CIO/2026-02/03b). The system draws on documented factors such as the number of animals killed, time since last observation, hunt type and killing method, existing knowledge on time to death, and whether authorities supervise the hunt. It may also incorporate risk estimates related to non compliance, reporting quality, and hunter experience. Beyond guiding observation priorities, the system can help identify areas for improving hunting practices and inspection systems.

The Committee welcomed the development of a systematic and objective approach and expressed appreciation for the work undertaken. Several members noted that the system represents a significant step forward and provides a strong basis for prioritisation, while emphasising that it should remain flexible and allow for refinement over time.

While the CIO acknowledged the proposal is just preliminary work, the inclusion of additional hunts and species was discussed. It was suggested that Icelandic seal hunts (grey and harbour seals) be incorporated into the system. In this context, it was noted that although reporting of seal hunting in Iceland is mandatory, compliance may be limited, and available data may therefore be incomplete despite the issuance of licences.

The Committee discussed possible ways to ensure a balanced distribution of OAs across countries. Suggestions included incorporating a “national factor” into the system and/or applying a rotational approach over a multi-year period (e.g., for a period of 5 years, all countries get at least one OA, and the country with most hunts gets two OAs). It was also proposed to consider placing limits on the number of OAs conducted in each country within a given timeframe. It was **agreed that the system be used as an initial screening tool to identify high-priority hunts, after which the Committee would discuss and agree on the final selection of OAs.**

The potential use of local or on-call observers was raised as discussed in previous meetings, and it was noted that this could have implications for both the prioritisation system and the implementation of OAs. The CIO **agreed that this issue (i.e., using local/on-call observers) required further discussion in the upcoming meeting.**

As a way forward, the Committee **agreed that members would review the system and associated data intersessionally, with comments to be shared by correspondence.** The aim is to further refine and finalise the system at the next meeting. It was noted that the system is intended for internal use.

3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OBSERVATION SCHEME

3.1 CONSIDERATION OF CHECKLISTS USED BY NATIONAL INSPECTORS

As outlined in the Provisions of the NAMMCO Observation Scheme (version 2021) “15. *If a national inspector is present at the time of the observation, the observer shall also oversee whether the inspection is done according to national regulations.*” While part of this task would naturally be carried out by the observer if an inspection takes place during the OA, the CIO agreed in CIO/2026-01 that preparatory work should begin by compiling the checklists used by national inspectors for each hunt and reviewing them in collaboration with the Committee on Hunting Methods (CHM). CIO members were contacted early April to send such checklists to the Secretariat to proceed with the compilation.

By the time of the meeting only Greenland (document CIO/2026-02/04b) and Iceland (document CIO/2026-02/04c) had submitted their checklists, and it was noted that the Icelandic checklist reflects earlier versions of checklists from 2023, which was being updated at the time of the meeting. The missing documents will be provided intersessionally.

The Committee discussed the purpose and use of these checklists, noting their relevance both for training (e.g., observer courses) and for actual observations conducted under OAs. It was noted that it falls within the remit of the CIO to assess whether national inspection checklists are aligned with NAMMCO recommendations.

The Committee **agreed to continue the compilation and review of the checklists intersessionally, and to further consider how this work should be conducted in collaboration with the CHM.**

4 NAMMCO OBSERVER CORPS

4.1 ANNUAL INFORMATION MEETING

The Observer Corps is invited annually to a short online meeting to keep observers informed and to gather their feedback on the OA. The meeting will take place in the autumn, and the agenda will be circulated in advance. The CIO **agreed to prepare the agenda by correspondence once the programme for the Observer Corps Training has been further developed.** The annual Observer Information Meeting will be held back-to-back with the Observer Corps Training (see item 4.2).

4.2 OBSERVER CORPS TRAINING

The Committee discussed the format and requirements of the Observer Corps Training. It was noted that previously the training was conducted in person and that according to the provisions all observers are expected to attend. Observers who are unable to attend should, as a minimum, have participated in the previous (2020) training course.

Concerns were raised regarding the necessity of the current format with a 3-days in-person program. One member questioned whether it is justified to require observers to be absent from their regular duties for several days, particularly when they may only participate in an once in an OA. It was also noted that observers may already receive relevant information through national channels, and that the overall value of the course should be carefully assessed, also due to its cost.

In response, the Committee acknowledged the importance of ensuring that observers receive adequate and harmonised training. Different approaches were discussed, including the possibility of improving cost-efficiency by introducing preparatory material to be completed in advance, thereby reducing the duration of the in-person component. A blended format combining online and in-person elements was also suggested.

Several members emphasised the broader value of the training, including the need to ensure a minimum level of knowledge among observers and to foster a sense of belonging to the Observer

Corps. This was considered particularly relevant for observers who may not otherwise be closely engaged with marine mammal hunting practices.

The Committee agreed that a decision on the format and organisation of the training should be made in a timely manner.

Financial aspects were also discussed. It was agreed that, as participation in the training is compulsory, costs could be covered by NAMMCO. The Committee further recalled that a key outcome from the previous training was that observers should not incur financial losses when participating in NAMMCO activities. In this context, it was noted that remuneration should reflect observers' regular salary levels, rather than applying a fixed rate. The Committee **agreed that CIO members would provide information on current observer rates at their respective Ministries and Directorates, and that the Secretariat would compile an overview of costs and contributions, including NAMMCO's financial commitments, for review intersessionally.**

With regard to practical arrangements, Copenhagen (Faroese Representation) was suggested as a possible venue.

5 OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES

5.1 STATUS UPDATE ON THE OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES IN NORWAY IN 2026

The OA in 2026 will consist of observing minke whaling in Norway. One observer is available, and the observation can be conducted on two whaling vessels, with which the Secretariat is in contact. At the time of the meeting, final administrative requirements regarding the OA were being discussed.

5.2 STATUS UPDATE ON THE OA IN WEST GREENLAND IN 2027

The OA in 2027 will observe narwhal, beluga, and walrus hunts in West Greenland. No updates were presented at the current meeting (for the latest updates, see [NAMMCO/CIO/2026-01](#)).

6 COMMUNICATION WITH HUNTER ASSOCIATIONS

The CIO's ongoing efforts to strengthen communication with hunters were briefly discussed, however no updates were provided by any Party at this meeting.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting of the CIO will be held back-to-back with the Observer Training Corps and Annual Meeting. The date will be decided by email correspondence, but the meeting is likely to take place on weeks 46 or 47 in 2026. No other business was discussed.

The report was adopted by correspondence 28 May 2026.

APPENDIX 1: AGENDA

- 1. Adoption of agenda and review of documents**
- 2. Methodology to identify upcoming Observation Activities**
- 3. Implementation of the Observation Scheme**
 - 3.1. Consideration of checklists used by national inspectors
- 4. NAMMCO Observer Corps**
 - 4.1. Annual Information Meeting
 - 4.2. Observer Corps Training
- 5. Observation Activities**
 - 5.1. Status update on the OA in Norway in 2026
 - 5.2. Status update on the OA in West Greenland in 2027
- 6. Communication with hunter associations**
- 7. Any other business**

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Documents in italic were not available at the meeting

Document Reference	Title	Agenda Item
Working Documents		
CIO/2026-02/01a	Agenda & list of documents	1
CIO/2026-02/01b	Draft annotated agenda	1
CIO/2026-02/02	CIO's workplan 2026-2028	1
CIO/2026-02/03a	Proposal for methodology on how to identify next OA (previously called CIO/2026-01/02a)	2
CIO/2026-02/03b	Test of proposal for methodology on how to identify next OA (previously called CIO/2026-01/02b)	2
CIO/2026-02/04a	<i>Faroese hunting inspectors' checklists</i>	3.1
CIO/2026-02/04b	Greenlandic hunting inspectors' checklists	3.1
CIO/2026-02/04c	Icelandic hunting inspectors' checklists	3.1
CIO/2026-02/04d	<i>Norwegian hunting inspectors' checklists</i>	3.1

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT LIST

NAMMCO MEMBER COUNTRIES

Guro Gjelsvik (NO)
Directorate of Fisheries

Ulla S. Wang (Chair, FO)
Ministry of Fisheries, Industry and Trade

Jóhann Ásmundsson (IS)
Directorate of Fisheries

NAMMCO SECRETARIAT

Geneviève Desportes
Secretary General

Naima El bani Altuna
Deputy Secretary