

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization



**Report of the NAFO Working Group on Improving Efficiency of
NAFO Working Group Process (E-WG) Meeting**

2017
via WebEx

NAFO
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada
2017

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1. Opening by the Chair, Fred Kingston (NAFO Secretariat)

The meeting of the Working Group on Improving Efficiency of NAFO Working Group Process (E-WG) was opened on 28 June 2017 at 09:00 hours (Atlantic Daylight Time) via WebEx. The NAFO Executive Secretary and meeting Chair, Fred Kingston, welcomed all delegates to the meeting (Annex 1).

2. Appointment of Rapporteur

The NAFO Secretariat was appointed rapporteur.

3. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as circulated (Annex 2).

4. Review schedule for upcoming Joint COM-SC Working Groups for 2017 (FC-SC WP 17-01 Rev. 2)

The Executive Secretary briefly provided an overview of the revised Working Paper, noting that, except for an envisaged meeting of the *Ad hoc* virtual NAFO Website Re-design Working Group: Phase II – Data Classification, all the Working Group meetings for this year have now been scheduled.

5. Review feedback received from Working Group meetings and the STACTIC Intersessional meeting since the last meeting on 30 January 2017 (COM-SC WP 17-02)

The Working Group briefly reviewed the feedback received from three (3) NAFO subsidiary bodies that met since the last E-WG meeting in January 2017. The discussion at these subsidiary bodies' meetings focused on the recommendations of the previous E-WG meeting, namely:

- ***The possibility of allocating two-week time period(s) annually to schedule proposed Working Groups meetings; and***
- ***The development of a clear communication mechanism amongst NAFO's subsidiary bodies to allow improved collaboration between them intersessionally.***

The participants at all three meetings expressed some support for the first recommendation. It was noted that the allocation of two-week time periods should not in any way preclude scheduling meetings outside these periods. It was also suggested that the Secretariat should prepare at every Annual Meeting a proposed meeting calendar indicating possible two-week time periods for the proceeding NAFO year.

Concerning the second recommendation regarding a clearer communication mechanism amongst NAFO subsidiary bodies, the participants at the meetings considered that this was desirable, but more reflection was needed to determine how to do this. In this context, one of the meeting reports stated that an option could be to revise the terms of reference of the various Working Groups and STACTIC to allow the respective Chairs to openly communicate amongst themselves. The Chair of the Scientific Council added that it was useful for her and another member of the Scientific Council to attend the recent meeting of the STACTIC Observer Program Review Working Group to discuss how the Scientific Council could provide input into potential changes to the NAFO observer program that could improve the use of fishery observer data for scientific purposes.

6. Identify mechanisms to improve efficiencies, maximize meeting opportunities and share best practices

Concerning the allocation of a number of two-week time periods, the E-WG considered the allocation of three (3) two-week periods, namely a two-week period around the end of February and the beginning of March; another two-week period around the end of April and the beginning of May, which would include the week for the traditional STACTIC intersessional meeting; and a final two-week period that would alternate annually between the last two full weeks of July and the last two full weeks of August. A July or August period would be required because (at least) the WG-EAFFM should be scheduled after the June SC meeting to take account any advice coming out from that meeting. It would alternate each year between the July and August dates to try to accommodate somewhat the conflicting traditional summer vacation months of a number of CPs. These two-week periods would not require meetings of NAFO subsidiary bodies to meet during those dates nor would they preclude the scheduling of meetings of NAFO subsidiary bodies outside those dates. The Secretariat could propose the specific periods for the upcoming NAFO year at each Annual Meeting for consideration by CPs. If this proposal is acceptable, and once specific periods are proposed, it would also be useful if CPs could check their respective holiday schedules, as well as the known meeting schedules of other RFMOs, to determine during the Annual Meeting whether there are any conflicts and, if so, whether the proposed meeting periods can be adjusted.

Concerning the development of a clear communication mechanism amongst NAFO's subsidiary bodies, the E-WG considered that Rule 5.1 of the Commission's Rules of Procedures, which basically is the terms of reference for STACTIC, be amended to add a provision allowing STACTIC intersessionally to receive input from, or provide input to, the Scientific Council and/or any other NAFO subsidiary body, without having to go formally through the Commission. Since the Chair of STACTIC was unable to attend this meeting, the Secretariat offered to contact the Chair to see whether this proposal could address STACTIC's communication concerns [Subsequent to the meeting, the Secretariat contacted the Chair of STACTIC on this matter. The Chair, in principle, agreed with this proposal and it was agreed that the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair of STACTIC, will present a proposal to STACTIC at the next Annual Meeting.] It was also mentioned that the respective terms of reference of all the Working Groups may need to be slightly amended to ensure such inter-communication.

The E-WG also briefly discussed whether CPs should consider reducing the number of Working Groups. In particular, it was mentioned that the remaining outstanding matters within the purview of the WG-CR or the WG-BDS could be subsumed under the other Working groups and their respective terms of reference of the remaining Working Groups could be amended accordingly.

The Chair of the WG-EAFFM raised concerns about the timely reporting of NAFO meetings this year. He mentioned in particular the long delay in producing the WG-ESA meeting report, which only was finalized just before the June SC meeting, that made it difficult for him, as co-Chair, to develop the agenda for his working group meeting. He recognized that this year there has been a lot of meetings to address the Greenland halibut issue, in particular for members of the SC, which has meant that there may not have been enough time between these meetings to produce final reports (and there was not enough time during these meetings to do the report at the meeting itself). However, he asked whether draft reports could be distributed more widely to alert CPs earlier about what had been discussed at these respective meetings.

7. Other matters

No other matters were raised.

8. Recommendations to forward to the Commission (COM)

The Working Group on Improving Efficiency of NAFO Working Group Process **recommends** the following:

- **Three (3) two-week periods be set aside every year for possible NAFO intersessional meetings, namely:**
 - a two-week period around the end of February and the beginning of March;
 - another two-week period around the end of April and the beginning of May, which would include the week for the traditional STACTIC intersessional meeting; and
 - a final two-week period that would alternate annually between the last two full weeks of July and the last two full weeks of August.

These two-week periods would not require meetings of NAFO subsidiary bodies to meet during those dates nor would they preclude the scheduling of meetings of NAFO subsidiary bodies outside those dates.

- **For the 2017-2018 NAFO year, the Working Group proposes the following periods, be considered for NAFO intersessional meetings:**
 - 26 February to 9 March 2018;
 - 30 April to 11 May 2018; and
 - 13 to 24 August 2018

- **Rule 5.1 of the NAFO Rules of Procedures: Commission be amended to add a provision allowing STACTIC intersessionally to receive input from, or provide input to, the Scientific Council and/or any other NAFO subsidiary body, without having to go formally through the Commission.**

The Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair of STACTIC, will present a proposal to STACTIC at the next Annual Meeting.

- **The Working Group on Improving Efficiency of NAFO Working Group Process continue its work for the 2017-2018 NAFO year under the same Terms of Reference.**

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 09:45 hours (Atlantic Daylight Time).

Annex 1. List of Participants

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Annex 2. Agenda

1. Opening by the Chair, Fred Kingston (NAFO Secretariat)
2. Appointment of Rapporteur
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4. Review schedule for upcoming Joint COM-SC Working Groups for 2017 (FC-SC WP 17-01 Rev. 2)
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