

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization



**Report of the NAFO Joint Commission-Scientific Council Working Group on
Risk-Based Management Strategies (WG-RBMS) Meeting**

06 February 2020
by WebEx

NAFO
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada
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1.	Opening by the co-Chairs	3
2.	Appointment of Rapporteur(s)	3
3.	Review of Terms of Reference	3
4.	Recap of progress so far on the PA review.....	3
5.	Plans for work going forward including a provisional timeline.....	4
6.	Other WG-RBMS Matters.....	5
7.	Date and Time of Next Meeting	5
8.	Adjournment.....	5
	Annex 1. List of Participants	6
	Annex 2. Agenda.....	8



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1. Opening by the co-Chairs, Fernando Gonzales-Costas (European Union) and Jacqueline Perry (Canada)

The meeting was opened at 10:00 hours (Atlantic Standard Time) on Thursday, 06 February 2020. The co-Chairs, Fernando Gonzalez-Costas (European Union) and Jacqueline Perry (Canada), welcomed representatives from Canada, European Union, and the United States of America (Annex 1).

2. Appointment of Rapporteur(s)

The NAFO Secretariat (Tom Blasdale, Scientific Council Coordinator and Ricardo Federizon, Senior Fisheries Management Coordinator) was appointed as Rapporteur.

3. Review of Terms of Reference

Co-Chair, Jacqueline Perry, introduced the Terms of Reference (ToRs) of *the NAFO Scientific Council Precautionary Approach Working Group (PA-WG)* (SCS Doc. 16/15) as presented in Annex 1 of the agenda, noting in particular that ToR point 2 has links with the on-going work of WG-EAFFM.

It was generally noted that lack of progress since January 2017 can largely be attributed to a lack of capacity and available expertise within SC rather than the achievability of the ToRs. However, it was further noted that the lack of progress could also partly be due to the ambiguity of the current ToRs. It was suggested that more concrete ToRs could help to a faster progress.

A particular sticking point relates to point 1.c of the ToRs. There has been disagreement over whether F_{msy} should be treated as a target or limit reference point. WG-RBMS members commented that this is a matter that would require direction from the Commission.

It was agreed that the current ToRs should continue to guide this work. SC will consider the ToRs during its June meeting and propose changes, if considered necessary.

4. Recap of progress so far on the PA review

Co-Chair, Fernando Gonzales-Costas, presented the current state of the working paper that is being developed by the Scientific Council Technical Working Group. The most recent version of this paper was presented as COM-SC RBMS-WP 20-01. Progress against specific ToRs was summarized as follows:

1. *To clarify the following elements:*

a. *To confirm/review the NAFO PA reference points definition in page 3 NAFO/FC Doc. 04-18;*

On this ToR, there is not much progress.

b. *To confirm/review the NAFO Management strategies and courses of action, including risk levels; on page 3 NAFO/FC Doc. 04-18;*

On this ToR, there is not much progress.

c. Distinction between MSY and limit/target related reference points;

This is one of the points where there have been more discussions. The most up-to-date conclusions and doubts are reflected in the COM-SC RBMS-WP 20-01.

d. Analysis in support of the development of other reference points (e.g. targets, buffers);

There is information in the COM-SC RBMS-WP 20-01 but there has been no final SC discussion.

e. To review the methods for the calculation and interpretation of risk and the quantification and qualification of uncertainties related to them;

There is information in the COM-SC RBMS-WP 20-01 but there has been no final SC discussion.

f. For stocks where risk analyses are not possible, provide options on how to establish buffer reference points on a stock by stock basis;

There is some information in the COM-SC RBMS-WP 20-01 but there has been no final SC discussion

g. Determine the conditions for when/if reference points should change and / or be re-evaluated.

On this ToR, there is not much progress.

2. Consider how a revised PA can fit within an Ecosystem Approach.

The existing text in the COM-SC RBMS-WP 20-01 should be updated with the conclusions of WG-ESA, SC and WG-EAFFM on this subject (Ecosystem Summary Sheets, etc). The main task of how to adapt the single-stock approach to the ecosystem approach still remain and will be a possible task for the WG-EAFFM August 2020 Workshop.

3. In reviewing the NAFO PAF the WG will also take into consideration other Precautionary Approach Frameworks with a focus in the North Atlantic;

This task is practically completed and was discussed by the SC. The most current revision is found in the COM-SC RBMS-WP 20-01. It may need an update since the work was done in 2016.

It was noted that, although many of the issues were discussed, not many have been resolved and that the material in the COM-SC RBMS-WP 20-01 has not yet been discussed in the SC or in WG-RBMS.

5. Plans for work going forward including a provisional timeline

The meeting agreed that it is necessary to re-visit the Chair and membership of the *NAFO Scientific Council Precautionary Approach Working Group (PA-WG)* since it has been inactive for an extended period.

It was suggested that the SC be asked to reconvene the *PA-WG*, in some form. The working group may meet by WebEx in advance of the June meeting to agree on current status in regard to COM-SC RBMS-WP 20-01 and try to advance the document before the June meeting. The outcome of the SC discussion, possibly including suggestions for work that could be outsourced, will be presented to WG-RBMS during the August meeting. It will be necessary to ensure that this material is circulated well in advance of the August meeting. A SharePoint section will be made available for use of the group.

The European Union delegation informed that it has made available to the NAFO Secretariat an amount of 100,000 € to finance possible work on the revision of the PA Framework. It was agreed the need to have guidance from PA-WG on how it could be allocated to advance this work.

Karen Dwyer (Canada) volunteered to take on the lead role of coordinating with SC with regards to reviving the working group.

6. Other WG-RBMS Matters

3M cod MSE

The European Union reported that their scientists are still working on this. The results will be presented to the SC before anything is presented to WG-RBMS. It is unlikely that there will be MSE progress to present to SC this year. The Secretariat will complete the summary document for presentation to the WG- RBMS in August. The 3M cod MSE code and results have been archived by the Secretariat in the NAFO secured network, as agreed.

Greenland halibut MSE

There will be an update assessment of this stock during the June SC meeting. A problem has been detected with the confidence intervals of projections produced under the SSM operating model, but it was not possible to determine the cause or extent of the issue within the timeframe of the June 2019 SC meeting. Canadian scientists are reviewing this and will present it at the June SC this year. It may be necessary to consider this matter during the WG-RBMS August meeting,

3LN redfish Conservation Plan and Harvest Control Rule

As outlined in the questions forwarded to the SC as recommended by WG-RBMS, SC will complete a full assessment and provide five-year projections. WG-RBMS will consider these results in August. Canada noted that this was a very important stock to Canada and that consistent with their domestic process, it has started work to consider additional options in the review of the 3LN redfish conservation plan and harvest control rule. This work will be further informed by the planned work of the SC in June and Canada will continue to update the WG-RBMS on this work and may have something more formal to share in advance of the August meeting.

7. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was proposed that a half-day joint session of WG-RBMS and WG-EAFFM should be held to discuss the results of the WG-EAFFM Workshop. Pending agreement with WG-EAFFM, the meeting dates in August would be as follows:

13 – 14 August	WG-EAFFM Workshop
17 – 19 August	WG-EAFFM meeting
19 August (afternoon session)	Joint meeting of WG-RBMS and WG-EAFFM to discuss outcomes of the WG-EAFFM Workshop
20 – 21 August	WG-RBMS meeting

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 hours (Atlantic Standard Time) on 06 February 2020.

Annex 1. List of Participants

CO-CHAIRS

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Annex 2. Agenda

1. Opening by co-Chairs, Fernando González-Costas (European Union) and Jaqueline Perry (Canada)
2. Appointment of Rapporteur(s)
3. Review of Terms of Reference

Annex 1 "Proposed ToR for the Scientific Council technical working group on PA Framework" (as contained in FC-Doc. 15-19 and SCS Doc. 16/15) will be discussed under this agenda item.

4. Recap of progress so far on the PA review

Annex 2 "Timeline for the revision of the PA Framework from WG-RBMS 2016" (as contained in SCS Doc. 16-19, pg. 13) will be discussed under this agenda item.

5. Plans for work going forward including a provisional timeline
6. Other WG-RBMS matters
7. Dates and time of next meeting
8. Adjournment

Annex 1 (of the Agenda).

Scope of the review of the NAFO Precautionary Approach Framework (PAF) adopted by the Fisheries Commission (FC-Doc. 15-19), and discussed by the Scientific Council Precautionary Approach Working Group as its Terms of Reference (SCS Doc. 16/15)

1. To clarify the following elements:
 - a. To confirm/review the NAFO PA reference points definition in page 3 NAFO/FC Doc. 04/18.
 - b. To confirm/review the NAFO Management strategies and courses of action, including risk levels, on page 3 NAFO/FC Doc. 04/18
 - c. Distinction between MSY and limit/target related reference points.
 - d. Analysis in support of the development of other reference points (e.g. targets, buffers).
 - e. To review the methods for the calculation and interpretation of risk and the quantification and qualification of uncertainties related to them.
 - f. For stocks where risk analyses are not possible, provide options on how to establish buffer reference points on a stock by stock basis.
 - g. Determine the conditions for when/if reference points should change and / or be re-evaluated.
2. Consider how a revised PA can fit within an Ecosystem Approach.
3. In reviewing the NAFO PAF the WG will also take into consideration other Precautionary Approach Frameworks with a focus in the North Atlantic.

Annex 2 (of the Agenda).

**Timeline for PA review as revised by Scientific Council in September 2016 (SCS Doc. 16-19, pg. 13)
(Original timeline for the PA revision agreed by WG-RBMS in 2016 contained in FC-SC Doc. 16-01).**

Timeline for PA Revision	status Sep. 16	16/ M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	17/J	F	M	A	M	J
ToR 3.																	
Discuss NAFO PA Successes and failures (done in March 2016)	✓																
Members work on summarizing the PA framework as used in other RFMOs and national plans (April-May 2016)	✓																
Results to be reviewed at the June 2016 SC Meeting.	✓																
ToR 1a. and 1c. (These tasks are related and should be completed together).																	
Review existing PA framework. (started in March 2016)	x																
June-September – Work on these ToRs.	x																
Present work to the joint meeting (September 2016)	✓																
ToR 1f.																	
Discuss spreadsheetstock status(March 2016 and April 2016)	✓																
Distribute to DEs to fill in completely (June 2016)	✓																
Classify stocks with regards to assessment level (June 2016).	x																
ToR 1d. Can only be done after 1f	x																
ToR 1e																	
March-May 2016 Members potentially work on ideas for analyses to help with identifying risk levels	x																
Work on analyses for risk levels (June-September 2016)	x																
ToR 1b. Can only be done after 1a, 1c and 1e is finished	x																
ToR 2.																	
Discuss with Chairs of WG-ESA working together on fitting the PA into an Ecosystem Approach (June 2016)	✓																
Work to be done at the November 2016 WG-ESA meeting																	
Work to Reviewed by SC at the June 2017 meeting																	
This ToR may need more time after the June 2017 meeting																	
ToR 1g Along with ToR 2 will be finished after the other ToRs.																	

✓ = completed, x - in progress.