

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization



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

02 November 2023
via Webex

NAFO
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
2023

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1. Opening by the Chair, Brynhildur Benediktsdóttir (NAFO Secretariat)

The Chair, Brynhildur Benediktsdóttir (NAFO Secretariat) opened the meeting on Thursday, 02 November 2023 at 08:05 hours (UTC/GMT -3 hours, Time in Halifax) and welcomed the Chairs and co-Chairs of the NAFO Working Groups (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. Finalize schedule for upcoming meetings scheduled for 2024

The tentative schedule of 2024 NAFO Meetings was presented in COM-SC WP 23-03.

The group focused its discussions on the NAFO Meetings still to be scheduled for 2024. It was noted that the exact date(s), format (i.e., in-person, virtual or hybrid) and location of many of the meetings are still to be confirmed by the Secretariat, after consultation with the respective Chairs, co-Chairs and Contracting Parties.

The tentative schedule of 2024 NAFO Meetings was revised in COM-SC WP 23-03 (Rev.) to incorporate the discussions of the group (Annex 3).

5. Consider the three two-week periods during the NAFO year for scheduling of possible intersessional meetings in 2025

To assist in meeting planning, the Working Group selects three two-week periods annually in which meetings of NAFO subsidiary bodies and Working Groups may be held. It was noted that as always, 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 group discussed if there was merit in continuing to establish these three two-week periods annually and it was agreed this provides helpful guidance when scheduling meetings. The three two-week periods proposed for 2025 were presented in COM-SC WP 23-04.

6. Recommendations to forward to the Commission and Scientific Council

The Working Group on Improving Efficiency of NAFO Working Group Process (E-WG) recommends that:

- **For the 2025 NAFO year, the following two-week periods, be considered for NAFO intersessional meetings:**
 - **17 – 28 February 2025;**
 - **31 March – 11 April 2025; and**
 - **14 – 25 July 2025**

7. Other matters

- **Meeting formats and participation**

The group noted that during the WG-RBMS Meeting in July 2023, there was discussion regarding meeting formats (in-person, virtual, hybrid) and Contracting Party participation.

The new hybrid meeting format has become standard practice following the COVID-19 pandemic. It was noted that in-person participation may better facilitate the meeting dialogue and may allow better opportunities for networking and additional discussions on the margins of meetings. The group noted that in-person participation may not always be possible as some Contracting Parties are facing travel constraints. A hybrid meeting format allows those delegates who otherwise have been unable to travel to an in-person meeting to participate virtually. The problem arises when the majority of the Contracting Parties decide to participate virtually so that the advantages of face-to-face participation are lost and it would probably be more efficient for everyone if the meeting were held virtually.

It was felt that feedback on meeting formats (in-person, virtual, hybrid) and Contracting Party participation from NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups would help facilitate this discussion. For that reason, it is requested that the matter be brought forward at upcoming NAFO meetings in 2024.

The Working Group on Improving Efficiency of NAFO Working Group Process (E-WG) agrees that:

- **Feedback from NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups is required on meeting formats (in-person, virtual, hybrid) and Contracting Party participation. It is requested that the matter be brought forward at upcoming NAFO meetings in 2024.**

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting is to be scheduled virtually early in November 2024.

The exact date and time(s) to be determined following the Annual Meeting of NAFO in September 2024.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 09:00 hours (UTC/GMT -3 hours, Time in Halifax).

Annex 1. List of Participants

CHAIR OF COMMISSION	Warner-Kramer, Deirdre (USA)
CHAIR OF SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL	González, Diana (European Union)
VICE-CHAIR OF SC	Simpson, Mark (Canada)
CHAIR OF STACFAD	Fagan, Robert (Canada)
CO-CHAIRS OF CESAG	Sosebee, Katherine (USA) Warner-Kramer, Deirdre (USA)
CO-CHAIR OF WG-EAFFM	Mencher, Elizabethann (USA) Sacau Cuadrado, Mar (European Union)
CO-CHAIR OF WG-RBMS	González-Costas, Fernando (European Union)
NAFO SECRETARIAT	Benediktsdóttir, Brynhildur Aker, Jana Blasdale, Tom Goodick, Stan LeFort, Lisa

Annex 2. Agenda

1. Opening by the Chair, Brynhildur Benediktsdóttir (NAFO Secretariat)
2. Appointment of Rapporteur
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Finalize schedule for upcoming meetings scheduled for 2024
5. Consider the three two-week periods during the NAFO year for scheduling of possible intersessional meetings in 2025
6. Recommendations to forward to the Commission and Scientific Council
7. Other matters
8. Date and Time of Next Meeting
9. Adjournment

Annex 3. 2024 NAFO Meeting – Tentative Schedule
(COM-SC Working Paper 23-03 Revised)

The following NAFO Meetings are scheduled, or are to be scheduled, for 2024:

Date	Title	Venue
January 2024 (TBD)	<p align="center">Scientific Council Meeting</p> <p><i>For GHL MSE: Testing CMP performance against established management objectives & initial discussions on exceptional circumstances protocol.</i></p> <p><i>For 3LN RED MSE: Address and review any further work on OMs, performance statistics, and CMPs stemming from WG-RBMS</i></p> <p>Proposed: In consultation with the SC Chair, a doodle poll is to be circulated to identify a date for a one-day virtual meeting during the weeks of 08 and 15 Jan.</p>	Webex
TBD To be discussed during Jan. SC Meeting.	<p align="center">NAFO: Scientific Council/Precautionary Approach Framework Working Group (PA-WG)</p> <p>Discussions on the PAF will take place during the January SC meeting, and an additional PA-WG Meeting may be scheduled but more details to follow the January SC Meeting.</p>	TBD
23 Feb.	Joint Advisory Group on Data Management (JAGDM) Meeting	Virtual
26-Feb. – 08-Mar.	<i>* First period for the scheduling of Working Group meetings</i>	
15–26 Apr.	<i>* Second period for the scheduling of Working Group meetings</i>	
Spring 2024	<p align="center">NAFO Joint Commission–Scientific Council Working Group on Risk-based Management Strategies (WG-RBMS) Meeting</p> <p>Proposed: A three (3) day meeting to be held virtually from 09:00 to 13:00 hours daily during the 15-26 April period.</p> <p>The Secretariat to confirm with Contracting Parties that the Spring WG-RBMS meeting will be held virtually during the 15-26 April period.</p>	Virtual
Early 2024	<p align="center">NAFO Informal Group to reflect on the workload of the Scientific Council</p> <p>Proposed: A half-day meeting to be held virtually in early 2024 (perhaps during the first two-week period of 26 February to 08 March)</p> <p>The COM and SC Chairs to discuss and confirm if one or two meetings are required. The proposal is for one meeting to be held in early 2024 and one to be held following the SC Meeting in June. It was noted that STACFAD is working intersessionally on this matter too.</p>	Virtual
Prior to 30 Apr.	NAFO Joint Commission–Scientific Council Catch Estimation Strategy Advisory Group (CESAG) Meeting	via correspondence unless new issues emerge

Date	Title	Venue
Prior to STACTIC May Mtg.	NAFO STACTIC Observer Program Review Working Group (WG-OPR)	TBD
06–08 May	NAFO Standing Committee on International Control (STACTIC) Intersessional Meeting	Copenhagen, Denmark
Prior to June SC Mtg.	NAFO SC STACREC Data Review Meeting Proposed: The Secretariat to confirm with meeting participants to hold the virtual meeting on 02 May	Virtual
31 May –13-Jun	NAFO Scientific Council and its Standing Committees Meeting	Halifax, Nova Scotia
Following the SC Meeting in June	NAFO Informal Group to reflect on the workload of the Scientific Council Proposed: A half-day meeting to be held virtually following the SC Meeting in June	Virtual
12–23 Aug.	<i>* Third period for the scheduling of Working Group meetings</i>	
Week of 12 Aug. (TBC)	NAFO Joint Commission–Scientific Council Working Group on Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management (WG-EAFFM) Meeting Proposed: The WG-EAFFM and WG-RBMS Meetings to be held back-to-back. The WG-EAFFM Meeting (2.5 to 3 days) is to be held followed by the WG-RBMS Meeting (3 days). The Secretariat to explore if meetings can be held during the week of 12 August as well as potential hosting options in Europe. Further details are expected in January.	In Europe (TBC)
Week of 12 Aug. (TBC)	NAFO Joint Commission–Scientific Council Working Group on Risk-based Management Strategies (WG-RBMS) Meeting Proposed: The WG-EAFFM and WG-RBMS Meetings to be held back-to-back. The WG-EAFFM Meeting (2.5 to 3 days) is to be held followed by the WG-RBMS Meeting (3 days). The Secretariat to explore if meetings can be held during the week of 12 August as well as potential hosting options in Europe. Further details are expected in January.	In Europe (TBC)
Sep. TBD	NAFO SC and STACFIS Shrimp Assessment Meeting <i>Focus: Shrimp in Div. 3M Assessment</i> Proposed: The one-day meeting is to be held virtually directly before the Annual Meeting in September.	Virtual
23–27 Sep.	NAFO 46 th Annual Meeting	Halifax, Nova Scotia
Oct./Nov. TBD	NAFO/ICES <i>Pandalus</i> Assessment Group Meeting (NIPAG)	TBD

Date	Title	Venue
Nov. TBD	NAFO Working Group on Improving Efficiency of NAFO Working Group Process (E-WG) Meeting	Virtual
Nov. TBD	NAFO Working Group on Ecosystem Science and Assessment (WG-ESA) Meeting The meeting date and further details to follow WG-ESA in November 2023.	TBD

* *As always, 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.*

** *Please note, the meeting dates have not all been confirmed and may be subject to change.*