

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization



**Report of the NAFO *Ad Hoc* Virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group:
Data Classification (WG-Data) Meeting**

12 April 2022
via WebEx

NAFO
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
2022

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Report of the NAFO *Ad Hoc* Virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification (WG-Data) Meeting

12 April 2022
via WebEx

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

The meeting was opened at 10:00 hours (Atlantic Daylight Time) on 12 April 2022 via WebEx. The STACFAD Chair, Robert Fagan (Canada), and representatives from Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), United Kingdom and the United States of America were present (Annex 1).

The Chair was pleased to see the number of Contracting Parties in attendance and looked forward to a productive discussion.

2. Appointment of Rapporteur

The NAFO Secretariat (Lisa LeFort, Senior Executive Assistant) was appointed as Rapporteur.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted (Annex 2).

4. Presentation on Work Completed

The NAFO Secretariat presented STACFAD WP 22-02 (Revised), specifically:

- An overview of the project contained in page 1.
- The feedback gathered regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation from those Working Groups that were able to discuss the topic contained in Annex 1.
- The current policies of each NAFO Body contained in Annex 2.
- The current task and outstanding work including consideration of a potential hybrid meeting documentation policy contained in page 2.

STACFAD WP 22-02 (Revised) is provided in Annex 3 of this meeting report.

The NAFO Secretariat provided an overview of the project as detailed on page 1 of STACFAD WP 22-02 (Revised).

The *Ad Hoc virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification* is tasked to develop a meeting documentation policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentation, and thereby enhance the transparency of the organization. The goal is to develop such a policy to be presented to STACFAD for consideration and adoption at the 2022 Annual Meeting of NAFO.

This work is being completed in response to Recommendation #26 of the 2018 NAFO Performance Review. The 2018 NAFO Performance Review Panel, Recommendation 26, Chapter V.3.2, reads: "*Recommends NAFO makes all working documents publicly available, unless otherwise requested by a Contracting Party or subject to confidentiality rules.*"

This work has been on-going since 2019, however progress has been impacted by the absence of in-person meetings due to the global pandemic as well as limited participation of Contracting Parties.

5. Current Task and Review Outstanding Work

The *Ad Hoc* Working Group reviewed the feedback gathered regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation from those Working Groups that were able to discuss the topic (Annex 1 of STACFAD WP 22-02 Revised).

The *Ad Hoc* Working Group reviewed the current policies of each NAFO Body (Annex 2 of STACFAD WP 22-02 Revised).

The Working Group was further reminded that COM WP 20-03 (Revised) was presented previously. This discussion paper outlined the current documentation practices and procedures of other regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), which was revised to include submissions from Working Group members to better reflect their experiences when participating in other RFMO meetings.

Consideration of a Hybrid Meeting Documentation Policy

The *Ad hoc* Virtual Working Group considered a hybrid policy as a possible viable option which could ensure transparency without impeding efficiency.

A potential hybrid meeting documentation policy is detailed on page 2 of STACFAD WP 22-02 (Revised):

- **Prior to the start of a meeting** – NAFO meeting documentation, such as working papers, which is received and deemed open access be made available to the general public on the NAFO website.
- **During the meeting** – NAFO meeting documentation, such as working papers and subsequent revisions, be posted on the NAFO Meetings SharePoint only.
- **Following the Annual Meeting of NAFO in September** – The majority of meeting documentation, such as working papers which are adopted during the Annual Meeting, are converted into a NAFO document and made available to the general public on the NAFO website.

It was noted that the focus of the considerations of such a policy regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation publicly is two-fold (see below). The Chair also noted that these considerations are more appropriately applied to meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

1. Access to working documents

The current practice is that following the Annual Meeting of NAFO in September, meeting documentation that is adopted, such as a Working Paper, is converted into a NAFO document and made available to the general public on the NAFO website, with the exception of working papers deemed “*restricted*”.

A meeting documentation policy will focus on working documents that are prepared prior to the meeting, during the meeting and/or not adopted at the meeting.

2. Determination of Working Papers that are “*restricted*” and/or subject to confidentiality rules

It will need to be determined who will decide which meeting documentation is deemed “*open access*” and which meeting documentation is deemed “*restricted*”.

Two approaches were considered:

- require each NAFO Body or Working Group to determine whether a particular NAFO meeting document is deemed “*open access*” or “*restricted*”, or
- establish a criteria/procedure for this determination.

After a brief discussion, the *Ad hoc* Virtual Working Group agreed to recommend to STACFAD at the 2022 Annual Meeting that, as an interim measure, a Contracting Party submitting a Working Paper designate that Working Paper to be “*open access*” and made available to the general public on the NAFO website prior to the

meeting. If the Contracting Party does not make such a designation, then it will not be made available to the general public.

6. Next Steps and/or Recommendations

The NAFO *Ad Hoc* Virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification (WG-Data) agreed that:

- In terms of development of a policy regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation publicly, a hybrid meeting documentation policy (as detailed on page 2 of STACFAD WP 22-02 Revised) be adopted by NAFO as an interim measure. This hybrid meeting documentation policy would be reviewed by STACFAD after one year (i.e., at the 2023 Annual Meeting of NAFO).
- In terms of development of guidelines for classification of working documents, an interim measure be adopted that the Contracting Party submitting a Working Paper is responsible to designate that Working Paper as “open access” and made available to the general public on the NAFO website prior to the meeting. If the Contracting Party does not make such a designation, then it will not be made available to the general public on the NAFO website prior to the meeting. These guidelines for classification would be reviewed by STACFAD after one year (i.e., at the 2023 Annual Meeting of NAFO).
- This *Ad Hoc* Working Group should continue to meet following the 2022 Annual Meeting to explore further means to improve the transparency of meeting documentation in NAFO and establish an interim procedure for determining whether documents prepared by the Secretariat are “open access” or not.

7. Other Business

No other business was discussed under this agenda item.

8. Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the *Ad hoc* Virtual Working Group to be determined, as required.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned and the meeting report was adopted by correspondence.

Annex 1. List of Participants

STACFAD CHAIR	Fagan, Robert
CANADA	Her, Natalie Johnson, Kate
DENMARK (IN RESPECT OF THE FAROE ISLANDS AND GREENLAND)	Doj, Iben Funch
UNITED KINGDOM	Round, Jake (STACFAD vice-Chair)
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	Jaburek, Shannah Mencher, Elizabethann
NAFO SECRETARIAT	Kingston, Fred LeFort, Lisa Pacey, Alexis

Annex 2. Agenda

1. Opening by the Chair, Fred Kingston (NAFO Secretariat)
2. Appointment of Rapporteur
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Presentation on Work Completed (STACFAD WP 22-02 Revised, page 1).
5. Current Task and Review Outstanding Work (STACFAD WP 22-02 Revised, page 2).
6. Next Steps and/or Recommendations
7. Other Business
8. Time and Place of Next Meeting
9. Adjournment

**Annex 3. Performance Review Recommendation #26:
Data Classification – NAFO Meeting Documentation**
STACFAD Working Paper 22-02 (Revised)

Preamble

In response to Recommendation #26 of the 2018 NAFO Performance Review, the *Ad Hoc* virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification has been working on the development of a formal policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentation to further enhance the transparency of this Organization.

- The 2018 NAFO Performance Review Panel, Recommendation 26, Chapter V.3.2, reads: *“**Recommends** NAFO makes all working documents publicly available, unless otherwise requested by a Contracting Party or subject to confidentiality rules.”*

Current Work

The goal of the *Ad Hoc* virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification for 2022 is to develop a meeting documentation policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentation, and thereby enhance the transparency of the Organization, to be presented to STACFAD for consideration and adoption at the 2022 Annual Meeting of NAFO.

The NAFO Secretariat proposes that:

- **The *Ad Hoc* virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification re-convene to review the feedback gathered regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation (contained in Annex 1).**
- **The *Ad Hoc* virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification re-convene to consider a hybrid meeting documentation policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentation (detailed above) including resolve any outstanding issues with such a policy.**

Work Completed up to the 2021 Annual Meeting

In 2020 – The *Ad Hoc* virtual Working Group met twice:

- 02 March 2020 via WebEx. The meeting report is contained in [COM Doc. 20-02](#).
- 23 June 2020 via WebEx. The meeting report is contained in [COM Doc. 20-06](#).

In 2021 – The *Ad Hoc* virtual Working Group did not meet, however previously agreed that feedback would be sought from NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees and Working Groups during upcoming meetings in 2020/2021.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic presented challenges in collecting this feedback. Nevertheless, some NAFO bodies were able to discuss this matter at least briefly so that the NAFO Secretariat was able to provide an update to STACFAD at the 2021 Annual Meeting of NAFO in STACFAD WP 21-06.

This update included:

- The discussions of those Working Groups that were able to discuss this matter during its meetings are summarized in Annex 1.
- The current policies of each NAFO Body regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentation are summarized in Annex 2.

STACFAD agreed that the *Ad Hoc* virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification will continue to work intersessionally on the development of a formal policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentation.

A Hybrid Meeting Documentation Policy

At its last meeting, the *Ad Hoc* virtual Working Group **agreed** that a hybrid meeting documentation policy could ensure transparency without impeding efficiency.

A hybrid meeting documentation policy may include:

- **Prior to the start of any NAFO meeting**, NAFO meeting documentation that is received and deemed “open access”, such as a working paper, is made available to the general public on the NAFO website and to the meeting participants on the NAFO Meetings SharePoint.
- **Prior to the start of any NAFO meeting**, NAFO meeting documentation that is received and deemed “restricted”, such as a working paper, is made available only to the meeting participants on the NAFO Meetings SharePoint.
- **During the meeting**, NAFO meeting documentation, such as working papers and subsequent revisions, is posted on the NAFO Meetings SharePoint, but not made publicly available on the NAFO website. (This is the current practice)
- **Following the Annual Meeting of NAFO in September**, meeting documentation that is adopted, such as a working paper, is converted into a NAFO document and made available to the general public on the NAFO website with the exception of Working Papers deemed “restricted”. (This is also the current practice)

While the above hybrid meeting documentation policy may be a viable option for NAFO, the *Ad Hoc* virtual Working Group will need to determine who will decide which documentation is deemed “open access” and which documentation is deemed “restricted”.

For example, would each NAFO Body or Working Group be required to determine whether a particular NAFO meeting document is deemed “open access” or “restricted”, or adopt a criteria/procedure to do so.

The feedback gathered from NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups further supports such a hybrid meeting documentation policy.

Working Group Membership

Another issue to be addressed is the limited Contracting Party membership and participation in the *Ad Hoc* virtual Working Group.

Report of WG-Data,
12 April 2022

To ensure that productive discussion may be had at its next meeting, the NAFO Secretariat invites STACFAD Representatives from the 2021 Annual Meeting to participate in the Working Group.



Annex 1. Feedback gathered regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation

The NAFO Secretariat presented COM WP 21-04 “*Request for Feedback – Ad Hoc virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification*” to those Working Groups that were able to discuss this matter during its meeting.

NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups	Feedback regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation
WG-BDS	<p>The NAFO Commission <i>ad hoc</i> Working Group to Reflect on the Rules Governing Bycatches, Discards and Selectivity (WG-BDS) in the NAFO Regulatory Area met via WebEx during 12–13 July 2021.</p> <p>The WG-BDS discussion regarding posting, and distribution of meeting documentation is provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to Recommendation #26 of the 2018 NAFO Performance Review, the <i>Ad Hoc</i> virtual NAFO Website Re-Design Working Group: Data Classification was tasked with development of a formal policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentation. This <i>Ad Hoc</i> Working Group will give its report to STACFAD. <p>At the 2020 Annual Meeting, STACFAD agreed that before a formal policy could be developed, feedback would be sought from NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups during upcoming meetings in 2020/2021.</p> <p>The Executive Secretary presented COM WP 21-04 and sought feedback of this WG on a policy of making working documents being made accessible to the public.</p> <p>Contracting Parties expressed general support for transparency. However, given the sensitivity of the data contained in some working papers, a blanket policy of making the working documents be made available to the public would run counter to the domestic policy of some Contracting Parties. Some participants indicated they would need further consultations with their respective delegations.</p>

NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups	Feedback regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation
WG-EAFFM	<p>The NAFO Joint Commission-Scientific Council Working Group on the Ecosystem Approach Framework to Fisheries Management (WG-EAFFM) met via WebEx during 14–16 July 2021 and 20-21 July 2021.</p> <p>The WG-EAFFM discussion regarding posting, and distribution of meeting documentation is provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In alignment with the 2018 Performance Review Panel Recommendations and their implementation, <i>the Ad Hoc virtual NAFO Website Re-design Working Group: Data Classification</i> at the 2020 Annual Meeting of NAFO was tasked with development of a formal policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentations. In this regard, feedback from the WG-EAFFM was sought whether working papers and other meeting working documents be made available to the public by posting them in the NAFO public website. <p>The Working Group expressed that in principle, there need to be greater transparency. However, there are situations where some documents cannot be made public for confidentiality reasons, <i>e.g.</i>, survey data, memos, papers as a basis for discussion or negotiation.</p>
WG-RBMS	<p>The NAFO Joint Commission-Scientific Council Working Group on Risk-Based Management Strategies (WG-RBMS) met during 24–26 August 2021 via WebEx.</p> <p>The WG-RBMS discussion regarding posting, and distribution of meeting documentation is provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In alignment with the 2018 Performance Review Panel Recommendations and their implementation, <i>the Ad Hoc virtual NAFO Website Re-design Working Group: Data Classification</i> at the 2020 Annual Meeting of NAFO was tasked with development of a formal policy regarding the posting and distribution of meeting documentations. In this regard, feedback from WG-RBMS was sought whether working papers and other meeting working documents be made available to the public by posting them in the NAFO public website. <p>The WG expressed general support for ongoing efforts to enhance transparency. However, it was noted that there are situations where it may not be appropriate to share documents publicly, in particular for confidentiality reasons, <i>e.g.</i>, catch data.</p>

NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups	Feedback regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation
WG-SP	<p>The <i>NAFO ad hoc Working Group on STACTIC Participation (WG-SP)</i>. The group last met on 25 August 2021 via WebEx.</p> <p>The WG-SP discussion regarding posting, and distribution of meeting documentation is provided below:</p> <p>Canada, the European Union, Japan, and the United States of America agreed to draft a proposal for a Rules of Procedure for STACTIC Participation for presentation at the STACTIC 2021 Annual Meeting.</p> <p>The proposal will use the current procedure that was established at the 2019 Annual Meeting as a basis, with refinements that will allow for improvements and clarification. Some improvements for consideration will include clarity on who can attend the in-camera (closed) sessions, timelines for identifying which agenda items will be discussed in the in-camera (closed) sessions, a process for having the agenda items for in-camera (closed) sessions grouped on the agenda to allow for the least disruption to the meeting, etc. It was also agreed that this procedure would not be relevant for observers participating in NAFO meetings under the NAFO Rules of Procedure for Observers to NAFO Meetings, but for non-governmental delegates appointed as experts or advisers; and that the procedure should ensure that access to information or documents conforms to the confidentiality rules in the NAFO CEM.</p>

Annex 2. Current policy for posting and distribution of meeting documentation

The table below details the current policies of each NAFO body posting and distribution of meeting documentation.

NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups	Current policy regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation
NAFO Scientific Council	<p>The working papers of the Scientific Council are neither publicly available on the NAFO website nor available on the password protected NAFO Members' pages.</p> <p>All final SCS (Scientific Council Summary) and SCR (Scientific Council Research) documents are publicly available on the NAFO website.</p>
NAFO Commission	<p>The working papers of the Commission are not publicly available on the NAFO website however they are available on the password protected NAFO Members' pages.</p> <p>Any working papers that are adopted at the Annual Meeting in September, are converted into NAFO documents which are then made publicly available on the NAFO website.</p>
STACFAD	<p>At the 2019 Annual Meeting of NAFO, STACFAD agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following a meeting, STACFAD Working Papers will be made publicly available on the NAFO website (https://www.nafo.int/) with the exception of Working Papers deemed restricted (e.g., personnel matters). <p>It was further agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An exclusive STACFAD Username and Password will no longer be required to access STACFAD documentation on the NAFO Members' pages. • STACFAD documentation will be available in the NAFO Meetings SharePoint (https://meetings.nafo.int/) with the exception of Working Papers deemed restricted (e.g., personnel matters). • Following a meeting, STACFAD Working Papers will be made publicly available on the NAFO website (https://www.nafo.int/) with the exception of Working Papers deemed restricted (e.g., personnel matters). • General Council (GC) and Commission Documents will be made publicly available on the NAFO website (https://www.nafo.int/) with the exception of documents deemed restricted (e.g., personnel matters).

NAFO Bodies, Standing Committees, and Working Groups	Current policy regarding posting and distribution of meeting documentation
STACTIC	<p>At the 2019 Annual Meeting of NAFO, STACTIC agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any Contracting Party can request to have their own STACTIC working papers posted to the NAFO public website going forward. <p>It was further agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NAFO vessel registry (vessel flag State, vessel name, radio call sign) be posted to the NAFO public website. • The NAFO Secretariat consolidate the information on the Research Vessels page of the NAFO Members website for review at the 2020 STACTIC Intersessional Meeting, and STACTIC will determine if it is appropriate to be posted to the NAFO public website. • The Provisional Catch Information page of the NAFO Members pages will remain on the NAFO Members pages website and not be posted to the NAFO public website. • Contracting Parties review the material on the Practices and Procedures page to determine which information may be posted to the public website, and which information should be migrated to the NAFO MCS Website at the 2020 STACTIC Intersessional Meeting. • The NAFO Secretariat consolidate the location and gear details information, and create a map showing the locations of the lost gear for review at the 2020 STACTIC Intersessional Meeting, and STACTIC will determine if it is appropriate to be posted to the NAFO public website. • The 3M redfish fishery real time catch uptake (showing total catch amounts) be posted to the NAFO public website. • Any Contracting Party can request to have their own STACTIC working papers posted to the NAFO public website going forward. <p>Any STACTIC working papers that are adopted by the Commission at the Annual Meeting in September, are converted into NAFO documents which are then made publicly available on the NAFO website.</p>