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Report of the NAFO *ad hoc* virtual working group to consider the initiation of a potential third Performance Review of NAFO (WG-PR) Meeting

20 January 2026
via Webex

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1. Opening by the Chair, Robert Fagan (Canada)

The Chair, Robert Fagan (Canada), opened the meeting at 09:02 hours (UTC -4 hours) on Tuesday, 20 January 2026, and welcomed representatives from Canada, Denmark (in respect of Faroe Islands and Greenland), European Union, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, the United States of America, as well as the Chair of the Commission, the Chair and vice-Chair of the Scientific Council, and the Chair of STACTIC (Annex 1).

2. Appointment of Rapporteur

The NAFO Secretariat was appointed as rapporteur of this meeting.

3. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as circulated (Annex 2).

4. Development of the Draft Terms of Reference for the third Performance Review of NAFO

The Chair summarized the decisions leading up to the creation and tasking for this working group. It was noted that at the 2024 NAFO Annual Meeting, the Commission agreed that a working group be established to discuss the scope and timeline and draft a Terms of Reference and criteria for the third NAFO Performance Review and present the documents to the Commission at the 2026 Annual Meeting ([COM Doc. 24-20](#)). At the 2025 NAFO Annual Meeting, the Commission, noting the workload issues of the Scientific Council, agreed that the Terms of Reference and criteria to conduct the third NAFO Performance Review should be focused on the assessment of the scientific process within NAFO ([COM Doc. 25-18](#)).

The Chair presented a first draft of the Terms of Reference for the third NAFO Performance Review that was circulated in advance of the meeting in COM PR-WP 26-02. The Chair noted that the draft was based on the Terms of Reference from the 2018 NAFO Performance Review, but with the scope focused on the issue of the scientific process within NAFO as requested by the Commission. The working group participants thanked the Chair for initiating the drafting of the document and discussed several aspects of the draft Terms of Reference.

There were discussions relating to the composition of the performance review panel. It was noted that it would be strongly recommended for one of the experts to have a background in fisheries science for the panel to best understand the nature of the workload of the Scientific Council. It was also noted that in the last performance review process, the external panelists could not be from a NAFO Contracting Party. It was agreed that further discussions would be required on defining the criteria for the external panelists, noting that if panel participation was limited to outside of NAFO Contracting Parties, it could significantly limit the number of potential candidates. It was also noted that the 2018 performance review panel indicated for future performance review exercises that NAFO should consider including an expert nominated by accredited observers as a member of the panel; it was agreed that this approach should be considered, but that Contracting Parties should make the ultimate decision on which experts would be included on the panel.

Discussions were also had relating to the details to be included in the scope of the performance review. The working group discussed whether the scope should include reference to specific detailed issues (e.g. the distribution of participants from Contracting Parties within the Scientific Council) and/or a list of elements, or whether the scope should remain broad to allow the panel some flexibility when completing the review. There was general agreement that there should be some flexibility in the scope, but that work would need to continue to develop the wording for the draft Terms of Reference.

The working group also reflected on the draft work schedule for the process, noting the consideration of having a draft of the panel report available for review by the Scientific Council at its June 2027 meeting. There was also discussion on whether the joint Commission–Scientific Council working groups should also have an opportunity to review the report before submission to the Commission. The working group also discussed the timeline and if there was openness to having a list of potential candidates in advance of the 2026 Annual Meeting to be able to quickly advance the timeline. Working group participants discussed the possibility but noted there may be concern with identifying potential candidates in advance of the Commission’s decision, and that further discussion on this would be required.

The Chair thanked the working group participants for the productive discussions and noted that the feedback received will be included in the next draft of the Terms of Reference. The working group participants also agreed to submit additional written comments to the NAFO Secretariat by 30 January 2025 for inclusion in the next draft.

5. Other Matters

No other matters were discussed.

6. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Chair highlighted the proposed workplan for this working group in COM PR-WP 26-01. The working group will work secretarially to update the draft Terms of Reference, with the next virtual meeting to be scheduled during 13–24 April 2026.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:24 hours (UTC -4 hours) on Tuesday, 20 January 2026.

The report was adopted via correspondence following the end of the meeting.

Annex 1. List of Participants

CHAIR	Fagan, Robert (Canada)
SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL CHAIR	González-Troncoso, Diana (European Union)
SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL VICE-CHAIR	Simpson, Mark (Canada)
COMMISSION CHAIR	Paardekooper, Joost (European Union)
STACTIC CHAIR	Moran, Patrick (USA)
CANADA	Krohn, Martha Marsden, Dale Rowsell, Nicole
DENMARK (IN RESPECT OF FAROE ISLANDS AND GREENLAND)	Nygård Bak, Rebekka
EUROPEAN UNION	Demblon, Jessica Merino Buisac, Adolfo
JAPAN	Iwano, Taisuke Mitome, Haruki Morishita, Joji
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	Tairov, Temur
UNITED KINGDOM	Gawlyk, Joe Sharples, James
USA	Mencher, Elizabethann
NAFO SECRETARIAT	Benediktsdóttir, Brynhildur Aker, Jana Goodick, Stan LeFort, Lisa Perreault, Andrea Thompson, Catherine

Annex 2. Agenda

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