



## **NAFO SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL (SC) WORKING GROUP ON ECOSYSTEM SCIENCE AND ASSESSMENT (WG-ESA) PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

Madrid (Spain), 4-12 November 2025

Details of the meeting ToRs are given in **ANNEX 1**.

### **Provisional Agenda and Terms of Reference (ToRs)**

- 1. Opening by the Chairs, Mar Sacau (EU) and Alfonso Pérez (EU).**
- 2. Appointment of Rapporteur**
- 3. Adoption of Agenda**
- 4. Review of Annual Meeting 2025 outcomes**
- 5. Commission requests for advice on management in 2026 and beyond, requiring input from WG-ESA in 2025 to be presented at the Scientific Council meeting June 2026.**
  - a) COM Request #1 (ANNEX A: Guidance for providing advice on Stocks Assessed).** In relation to Tier 1 of the Roadmap Scientific Council should provide annually catch information in relation to 2TCI, including recent cumulative catch levels and a scoping of expected cumulative catch levels. Ecosystem summary sheets should be monitored annually and updated on a five-year cycle.
  - b) COM Request #6.** In relation to the habitat impact assessment component of the Roadmap (VME and SAI analyses), the Commission requests that Scientific Council to:
    - a. Continue to progress work on the centralized data repository using ArcGIS online to host the data and data-products for scientific advice, in conjunction with the NAFO Secretariat.
    - b. Work towards the reassessment of VMEs and impact of bottom fisheries on VMEs for 2027; including potential management options in the reassessment of bottom fisheries.
    - c. Develop materials on the potential of submitting NAFO coral bottom fishing closed areas as OECMs for discussion at the 2026 WG-EAFFM meeting.
- 6. Commission requests for advice on management in 2026 and beyond, requiring longer term input from WG-ESA.**
  - a) COM Request #5.** In relation to the Ecosystem Roadmap as a whole, the Commission requests the Scientific Council, with input from the WG-EAFFM, to continue work on the development of a reference document detailing the ecosystem roadmap, for completion by the 2026 Annual Meeting.
  - b) COM Request #10.** The Commission requests the Scientific Council, as workload allows, in consultation with the NAFO Secretariat, to draft a scoping document for a potential in-person meeting to explore approaches for further integrating information related to climate change throughout Scientific Council operations. This scoping document should identify the scientific

expertise needed both within and outside Scientific Council and potential financial and workload implications.

**7. Other Business**

**8. Date and place of next meeting**

**9. Adjournment**

## ANNEX 1. WG-ESA TERMS OF REFERENCE

Please note that this schedule is provisional and subject to changes.

### THEME 1: SPATIAL CONSIDERATIONS

**ToR 1.** Update on identification and mapping of sensitive species and habitats (VMEs) in the NAFO area.

1. Update on VME indicator species data and VME indicator species distribution from EU; EU-Spain Groundfish Surveys and Canadian Surveys (*Bárbara, Sara, Rylan, Mar*)
2. Improvements to the Quality Assurance (QA) of data on VME indicators from RV catches (*Javier*)
3. Update on the methodology to assess the presence of *Pennatula aculeata* (*Claude*)
4. Okeanos Explorer work on the Corner Rise Seamounts [*COM. Request #6b*] (*Lara Maleen*)
5. Update on the centralized data repository using ArcGIS Online [*COM. Request#6a*] (*Lauren, etc*)

### THEME 2: STATUS, FUNCTIONING AND DYNAMICS OF NAFO MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

**ToR 2.** Update on recent and relevant research related to status, functioning and dynamics of ecosystems in the NAFO area.

1. VMEs in the NAFO Regulatory Area: Updated SDM of Selected VME Indicators (Large and Small Gorgonian Corals, Erect Bryozoans and Sea Squirts) [*COM. Request#6b*] (*Javier, Ellen, etc*)
2. VMEs in the NAFO Regulatory Area: Updated Kernel Density Analyses of VME Indicators [*COM. Request#6b*] (*Ellen, Cam, Javier, etc*)
3. Identification of VMEs in the NAFO Regulatory Area Combining Kernel Density Analyses, SDM and Empirical Data [*COM. Request#6b*] (*Ellen, Cam, Javier, etc*)
4. Work on modelling the individual sea pens species and their overlaps [*COM. Request#6b*] (*Anna*)
5. High Resolution Climate Projections to 2100 for Use in Species Distribution Modelling of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem Indicators in the NAFO Regulatory Area [*COM. Request#6b*] (*Ellen, Zeliang, Cam, etc*)

### THEME 3: PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF ECOSYSTEM KNOWLEDGE TO FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

**ToR 3.** Update on recent and relevant research related to the application of ecosystem knowledge for fisheries management in the NAFO area.

1. Regular Monitoring of Ecosystem Summary Sheets (ESSs) for Divisions 3LNO and 3M [*COM. Request#1*] (*Mariano, Diana, Irene, etc*)
2. Formalization of a full Workplan for the 2028 ESSs update: Analysis of by-catch and discards and proposal for building an ETP species list [*COM. Request#1*] (*Patricia, Mark, Diana, Irene, Javier, Jana*)
3. Updates on the Ecosystem Production Potential (EPP)-Total Catch Index (TCI) framework, including primary production estimates to inform EPP models for TCI calculations [*COM. Request#1*] (*Mariano, STACFEN, etc*)
4. Update on NAFO Roadmap reference document [*COM. Request#5*] (*Mariano*)
5. Results of the questionnaire to designated experts regarding the potential implementation of ecosystem approach (Tiers 2 and 3) in stock assessment (*Alfonso*)
6. Review of status of coral OECM submission with 2025 updates [*COM. Request#6c*] (*Ellen, Andy*)

7. Draft a scoping document for a potential in-person meeting to explore approaches for further integrating information related to further integrating information related to climate change throughout Scientific Council operations [*COM. Request#10*] (*NAFO Secretariat, all*)
8. Calculation of biomass for the SAI work [*COM. Request#6b*] (*Ellen, Cam*)
9. Developing a workplan for the "reassessment of bottom fisheries including SAI" [*COM. Request#6b*] (*Andy, all*)
10. Developing a workplan for the assessment of the "management options" as part of the reassessment of bottom fishing [*COM. Request#6b*] (*Andy, all*)
11. Update on ongoing studies on non-fishing activities in the NRA (*Pablo, Sara, Santi, Mar*)

#### **THEME 4: OTHER BUSINESS**

1. DSF Project, FAO: Updates on EAFM Symposium, Climate change and other project work relevant to WGESA (*Tony Thompson*)
2. EAFM Symposium: Update on submission to JNAFS (*Rick and Andie*)
3. Update on BBNJ Agreement (*Brynhildur*)