

**41st ANNUAL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 2019****Report on Scientific Research and Other Trust Funds
received during the period October 2018 to September 2019
(Prepared by the NAFO Secretariat)**

NAFO Financial Regulations: *Rule 5 – Scientific Research Fund*

The Commission may establish a Scientific Research Fund to support scientific research projects recommended by the Commission and/or the Scientific Council or specific non-recurring projects entered into with third parties. The source of monies therein being discretionary contributions from Contracting Parties, above and beyond their annual budget contributions, from agencies of Contracting Parties and from other donors, with the following restrictions:

- (a) Contributions to any scientific research project under the Scientific Research Fund may be accepted, provided that the purposes for which the contributions are made are consistent with the policies, aims, and activities of the Organization; and
- (b) Contributions offered from sources other than Contracting Parties to any scientific research project under the Scientific Research Fund may be accepted, subject to agreement by the Contracting Parties that the purposes of the contributions are consistent with the policies, aims, and activities of the Organization.

This fund shall not be used to fund the general operations of the Organization, except for the recovery of administrative expenses associated with these projects.

The Executive Secretary shall report to Commission/STACFAD at each Annual Meeting on the condition of the Scientific Research Fund, including the contributions received and their dispositions.

The Scientific Research Fund is administered by the Executive Secretary, subject to guidelines established by the Commission.

NAFO Financial Regulations: *Rule 6 – Trust funds*

The Executive Secretary may accept on behalf of NAFO voluntary contributions from Contracting Parties, or from other sources subject to agreement by the Contracting Parties, provided that the purposes for which such voluntary contributions have been made are consistent with the policies, aims and activities of NAFO.

The Executive Secretary shall establish trust funds to cover such voluntary contributions and shall report on their receipt and use to the Commission/STACFAD.

Scientific Research Funds (Rule 5)
Summary of contributions received and dispositions
2018-2019

1. NEREIDA III Initial Analysis of Sea Pen VME Resilience in the NAFO Regulatory Area - 2016

Project Executive Summary - The general objective of the present study is to enable the continued analysis of NEREIDA habitat and benthic species data with a focus on sea pen to refine the previously developed biomass distribution model of sea pen VME and to assess at a functional level the significance of sea pen VME. NAFO via its CPs is required as part of its obligations under the NCEM to undertake a reassessment of its bottom fisheries and review its VME fishery closures every 5 years (Annex I.E (V), NAFO/FC Doc. 14/1). In 2016 NAFO agreed to close a new area to protect sea pen VME to the east of the Flemish Cap for 2 years as a precautionary measure whilst new evidence on the resilience and function of sea pen could be further compiled and reviewed. This study contributes to this review process.

The work was carried out by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), United Kingdom.

NEREIDA III Grant (maximum amount)	€ 75,000
Total grant funds received from the European Commission	€ 66,686
Grant funds disbursed to Cefas	€ 66,156
NAFO Administration Fees	€ 530

Project Complete.

2. NEREIDA IV data analysis in support of assessing VME habitat functions and SAI on VME functions in the NAFO Regulatory Area (Year 4)- 2018 & 2019

Project Executive Summary - There is a need to further develop methods and scientific evidence in support of the assessment of FAO SAI (Significant Adverse Impact) assessment criteria, particularly at the functional level. The general objective of this grant is to enable the continued analysis of NEREIDA habitat and benthic species data in support of the reassessment of VME closures in 2020 and the reassessment of NAFO bottom fisheries required in 2021.

The work is being carried out by Cefas and the Spanish Institute of Oceanography - Instituto Español de Oceanografía (IEO).

NEREIDA IV Grant (maximum amount)	€ 286,760
1 st Installment of grant funds received from the European Commission	€ 200,704
1 st Installment of grant funds disbursed to Cefas	€ 100,366
1 st Installment of grant funds disbursed to IEO	€ 100,366
NAFO Administration Fees	€

Project is ongoing.

3. NEREIDA V NAFO - Potential vulnerable marine ecosystems – Impacts on deep-sea fisheries - Year 5

Project Executive Summary - There is a need to quantify in absolute terms the actual area of seabed impact caused by bottom trawl gears in the NAFO footprint. Furthermore, the actual area of impact will allow the assessment of SAI, specifically the resilience of the sea pen assemblage, to be validated using empirical data. The general objective of this grant is to enable the continued analysis of NAFO PotEntial VulneRable Marine Ecosystems-Impacts of Deep-seA Fisheries (NEREIDA) habitat and benthic species data in support of the reassessment of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VME) closures in 2020 and the reassessment of NAFO bottom fisheries required in 2021.

The work is being carried out by Cefas and IEO.

NEREIDA V Grant (maximum amount)	€ 100,000
1 st Installment of grant funds received from the European Commission	€ 70,000
1 st Installment of grant funds disbursed to Cefas	€ 34,650
1 st Installment of grant funds disbursed to IEO	€ 34,650
NAFO Administration Fees	€

Project is ongoing

4. Catch Estimate Study 2018 – NAFO development of a single approach for catch estimates based on current NAFO compliance and scientific observers methodologies

A large amount of the data used by NAFO, especially by the Scientific Council in undertaking assessment, comprises catch, effort and biological data for commercially-exploited and assessed stocks.

Obtaining accurate estimates of commercial catch from fisheries in the NAFO area is critical to the assessment and management of most NAFO stocks. At present, Scientific Council is trying to deal with the issue of not having reliable catch estimates for several stocks, and the impact on various stock assessments. The quality of scientific estimates depends primarily on the quality of the input data, where one of the areas of uncertainty is the estimation of catches made by the scientific observers. In examining the accuracy of catch estimates by scientific observers (who, as opposed to compliance observers, do not have a formal role in the NAFO conservation and management measures), it is important to understand the relationship of these estimates to vessel logs and the accuracy of vessel logs.

Observed catch discrepancies, as pointed out by the PREP, are due to differences in estimates of the tow catch found in different sources such as logbooks data, scientific observer's data, compliance observer's data and inspection on board reports data on a tow-by-tow basis. Therefore, it is important to address the methodology behind the tow catch estimates leading to the catch discrepancies observed in some stocks. The objective is to develop a single approach for catch estimates using data from the NAFO compliance observer reports and the scientific observer reports from flag State Contracting Parties.

MRAG Americas was contracted to perform the above work.

Catch Estimate Study Grant (maximum amount)	€ 100,000
1 st Installment of grant funds received from the European Commission	€ 70,000
Installments of grant funds disbursed to MRAG	€ 59,037
NAFO Administration Fees	€

Project Complete. Final reporting in progress.

Summary of other Trust Funds (Rule 6)
Summary of contributions received and dispositions
2018-2019

1. NAFO Annual Meeting Estonia – 2018

An invitation by the European Union to hold the 2018 Annual Meeting of NAFO and Estonia as a host for the meeting, was accepted by the Organization. NAFO's 40th Annual Meeting was held at the Radisson Blu Hotel Olümpia in Tallinn, Estonia during 17-21 September 2018. All logistical planning (meeting rooms, equipment, coffee breaks, security service, reception, HoD dinner, etc.) for the hosting of the NAFO Annual Meeting was done in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Republic of Estonia. Through a grant agreement with the European Commission, € 47,559 was received to offset the above logistical expenditures.

Grant funds received from the European Commission	€ 47,559
Grant Funds disbursed to the Estonian Ministry of Environment	€ 47,089
NAFO Administration Fees	€ 500

Project is complete.

2. NAFO – Improvement of NAFO Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) Website – 2018

Project Summary - Further development of the MCS website towards a secure central hub for sharing and storage of inspection/observer reports, together with information submitted by Contracting Parties is ongoing. With the above in mind, reliable, robust and redundant backup solutions become even more important. As the MCS website grows in scope, new appropriate backup technologies are necessary. Prior to the development of the MCS website, the Secretariat received many of the inspection related documents in hard copy, therefore, the digitization of the historical information for upload to the website is necessary.

The NAFO Secretariat performed the installation and configuration of a backup solution that incorporated the latest technology in tape backup as well as adding a disk backup solution in the middle. The Secretariat also hired external staff to scan and upload historical documents to the MCS website.

Grant funds received from the European Commission	€ 14,130
Grant Funds disbursed to the NAFO Secretariat	€ 13,950
NAFO Administration Fees	€ 180
Note: The NAFO Secretariat incurred \$4,455 of its own funds from the computer budget to complete the MCS 2018 project.	

Project is complete.

3. NAFO 2019 Scientific Council and its Standing Committees (*3M Cod Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) Meeting*)

The Scientific Council (SC) of NAFO conducted a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) of the Flemish Cap (NAFO Div. 3M) cod stock. Scientists from amongst NAFO's 12 Contracting Parties, along with external experts, were invited to participate in the meeting. The MSE meeting took place from 28 to 31 January 2019 in London, United Kingdom. All logistical planning (e.g., booking an appropriate meeting venue, equipment, travel arrangements, etc..) as well as onsite technical and administrative support was provided by the NAFO Secretariat.

Through a grant agreement with the European Commission, € 8,040 was received to offset the above logistical expenditures.

NAFO 2019 Cod MSE Grant (maximum amount)	€ 17,500
Grant funds received from the European Commission	€ 8,040
Grant funds disbursed to the NAFO Secretariat	€ 7,540
NAFO Administration Fees	€ 500

Project is complete.

4. NAFO Annual Meeting France - 2019

An invitation by France to host NAFO's 41st Annual Meeting was accepted by the Organization. The meeting will be held at the Pullman Bordeaux Lac Hotel in Bordeaux, France during 23-27 September 2019. All logistical planning (meeting rooms, equipment, coffee breaks, security service, reception, HoD dinner, etc.) for the hosting of the NAFO Annual Meeting will be done in collaboration with the France Ministry for Food and Agriculture. A grant agreement with the European Commission will assist to offset the above logistical expenditures.

NAFO Annual Meeting France 2019 Grant (maximum amount)	€ 150,000
1 st Installment of Grant funds received from the European Commission	€105,000

Project is ongoing.