

Instructions for Observers subject to review

Introduction

This document provides the reporting template and accompanying instructions for Observers to be reviewed during the Finnish Chairmanship (2017-2019).

The deadline for the submission is **1 June 2018**.

According to the "Arctic Council Rules of Procedure" (annex 2), every four years Observers are to state their continued interest in Observer status, and will be reviewed in a Ministerial meeting. During the Finnish Chairmanship, the following 18 Observers admitted 2000-2015 will be subject to review:

- France
- Italy
- Japan
- People's Republic of China
- India
- Republic of Korea
- Singapore
- Spain
- International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO)
- North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Arctic Institute of North America (AINA)
- Association of World Reindeer Herders (AWRH)
- Circumpolar Conservation Union (CCU)
- International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA)
- International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)
- University of the Arctic (UArctic)

Role of Observers

The role and responsibilities of Observers, as well as criteria for admission to the Arctic Council, can be found in the "Arctic Council Rules of Procedure" (annex 2) and the "Observer Manual for Subsidiary Bodies".

The primary role of Observers is to observe the work of the Arctic Council. Observers contribute to the Arctic Council primarily through engagement at the level of Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups. Observers are invited to the meetings and other activities of the Arctic Council unless the Senior Arctic Officials decide otherwise. Observers may also propose projects through an Arctic State or a Permanent Participant.

Report submission

Observer reports should include the relevant information described below and in the template.

(a) A description of the Observer's contributions to the work of the Arctic Council since the time of the Observer's most recent submission, or in the previous two years, with special focus on contributions to the subsidiary bodies through project participation and support, as well as collaboration with Permanent Participants.

(b) If applicable, a description of the Observer's future plans to contribute to the work of the Arctic Council, with special focus on contributions to the subsidiary bodies through project participation and support, as well as collaboration with Permanent Participants.

(c) If applicable, a description of the Observer's contributions to other aspects of the Arctic Council and its goals not covered in the previous sections since the time of the Observer's most recent submission, or in the previous two years.

Observer reports should be submitted electronically to the Arctic Council Secretariat via email: acs@arctic-council.org.

The reports should be submitted to the Arctic Council Secretariat not later than **1 June 2018**. Please keep in mind while preparing your report that all Observer reports will be published on the official Arctic Council website (www.arctic-council.org).

If an Observer does not submit a report, the Arctic Council will consider this an indication that the Observer is no longer interested in maintaining status as an accredited Observer to the Arctic Council.

Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

NORTH ATLANTIC MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION (NAMMCO)

Date of submission:

29 May 2018

Observer's website, if appropriate:

www.nammco.no

Information for appropriate contact person

Full name: Geneviève Desportes

Email: genevieve@nammco.no

Telephone: +47 950 21 228

Organization or department: NAMMCO Secretariat

Job Title: General Secretary (GS)

Full mailing address:

c/o NAMMCO
PO Box 6453
Sykehusveien 21-23
N-9294 Tromsø, Norway

Is your state or organization still interested in continuing as an Observer of the Arctic Council?

Yes No

Observer Report

Please describe in no more than 2 pages your state's or organization's contributions to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years. Please highlight contributions to specific projects, such as through proposals, concept development, in-kind and financial support, and hosting of meetings. Please detail any collaboration with Permanent Participants, such as project proposal endorsement and support.

1. Arctic Council

NAMMCO follow the discussions at the SAO and Ministerial meetings through its member states representatives. NAMMCO regularly participate in the Arctic Council Communication Calls with Observers.

2. CAFF related activities

NAMMCO is an active member of CAFF Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program Marine Mammal Expert Group since October 2015. Since December 2016, time of its most recent report, NAMMCO participated to the several meetings of the Arctic Council's Subsidiary Bodies and invited representatives to contribute to its own projects.

NAMMCO organized a Global Review of Monodontids (narwhal and beluga) (GROM), with the aim of completing a comprehensive review of the status of all populations/stocks of narwhals and belugas throughout the Arctic. CAFF was invited to join the Steering group and Tom Barry, CAFF ES, participated on the behalf of CAFF. The main funding for this initiative comes from NAMMCO and Greenland and particularly focused on enabling Russian scientists to participate, so the knowledge coverage is as pan-arctic as possible.

A Workshop was held in March 2017, where scientists and hunters' organisations from range states and Territories participated (Canada - with representation from DFO, Inuvialuit, Nunavik and Nunavut, Greenland, Norway, Russia, and USA. Tom Christensen, co-chair of CBMP, made a short presentation on CAFF, the CBMP and SAMBR, while Desportes, NAMMCO GS, presented the conclusion of SAMBR relevant to the group.

The scientific report can be accessed online at <https://nammco.no/topics/sc-working-group-reports/>

CAFF Board meeting, Fairbanks, Alaska, 6-7 September:

Prewitt, NAMMCO Scientific Secretary, attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the activities in NAMMCO with relevance to CAFF, specifically on Arctic marine mammals. The board member from the Kingdom of Denmark (representing Greenland) noted that there are many experts who work with both CAFF and NAMMCO, and that it would benefit both organisations to have a close cooperation.

CAFF / Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP), Anchorage, Alaska, 11-13 October:

Prewitt attended the meeting of the CBMP group, NAMMCO most directly relevant group within CAFF. This meeting was a joint meeting between the Marine and Coastal groups. NAMMCO has been active in the Marine group, attending its meetings since October 2015, and contributing to the writing of the State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR).

Prewitt gave a presentation on the Global Review of Monodontids meeting. The participants agreed that the results from this meeting were relevant to the work of the Marine Mammal Expert Group within the CBMP – Marine, and will be incorporated into their future work.

Tom Barry, Executive Secretary of CAFF, was invited to attend the annual meeting of the NAMMCO Scientific Committee, Reykjavik, November 2017, and give a presentation of the results of SAMBR and possible areas of cooperation between NAMMCO SC and CAFF were discussed.

NAMMCO (GS) is part of the of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the next Arctic Biodiversity Assessment Congress to be hold in Finland in October 2018. She will also contribute with the following presentation "Reconciliating conservation and sustainable harvest" The presentation addresses key finding 7 of the ABA "Overharvest was historically the primary human impact on many Arctic species, but sound management has successfully addressed this problem in most, but not all, cases", showing that sound scientific based management can reverse negative tendencies in population trends, as well as policy recommendations no. 10. "Promote the sustainable management of the Arctic's living resources and their habitat." and 10b "Develop pan-Arctic conservation and management plans for shared species that are, or will potentially be, harvested or commercially exploited that incorporate common monitoring objectives, population assessments, harvesting regimes, guidelines for best practices in harvest methodology and consider maintenance of genetic viability and adaptation to climate change as guiding principles."



If applicable, please describe in no more than 1 page your state's or organization's future plans for contributing to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups. Please highlight intentions to contribute to specific projects and to collaborate with Permanent Participants.

NAMMCO will continue to participate in the Arctic Council Communication Calls with Observers.

NAMMCO will continue prioritising its participation to CAFF, the CBMP Marine Mammal and Coastal Expert Groups, and the CBMP Marine Mammal Expert Network.

The GROM review carried out at the initiative and under the auspice of NAMMCO will inform the future monitoring carried out under the framework of the CAFF/CBMP, and specifically the aspects relevant to narwhal and beluga. The possibility of storing the dataset developed at the WS in the CAFF Arctic Biodiversity Data Service is presently investigated.

Bowhead whales, beluga, narwhal, walrus, ringed, bearded, hooded and harp seals have been identified as key focal ecosystem components in the Atlantic Arctic marine ecosystem by the CBMP Marine Mammal Expert Network. As such they are considered either central to the functioning of the ecosystem (and, therefore, likely to be good proxies of underlying changes) and/or of substantial value to Arctic residents. NAMMCO regularly conducts assessment of beluga, narwhal, walrus, harp and hooded seal stocks (next assessment: walrus in October 2018, narwhal and beluga in spring 2019, harp and hooded seals in September 2019), and generates management advice for these species. These assessments will contribute valuable information and review to the work undertaken in the framework of CBMP. NAMMCO has also planned to undertake a review and an assessment of ringed and bearded seals, as well as bowheads in the coming years (2020 or 2021), to which it would like to associate CAFF.

If applicable, please describe in no more than 1 page your state's or organization's contributions to other aspects of the Arctic Council and its goals not covered by the previous sections since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years.

NAMMCO has regular contact and interchange with member states of the Arctic Council since there is an overlap in membership. In addition to the fact that all four NAMMCO member governments are active participants in the Arctic Council, Canada, the Russian Federation and Denmark also participate as observers to NAMMCO.

There are three areas which are common to the two organisations: environmental and conservation issues and sustainable utilisation.

Environmental Issues:

The necessity of maintaining the quality of the marine environment is an important factor in NAMMCO's approach to conservation and management of marine mammals. Whales and seals are at the highest level of the food chain in the marine ecosystem, and are therefore especially vulnerable to the possible long-term effects of pollutants.

NAMMCO's internationally based scientific assessments of marine mammal stocks and species in the Arctic aim will put in the coming future an emphasis on taking into account environmental factors, such as contaminants and other human impacts, which will help informing the monitoring and assessment work of AMAP.

Cooperation on marine mammal conservation and management through NAMMCO also emphasises the importance of traditional knowledge in monitoring the ecosystem.

Conservation Issues:

NAMMCO brings together a broad range of scientific expertise on marine mammals in the North Atlantic. The work of the Scientific Committee has resulted in a number of comprehensive reports on stocks and species that have not before been subject to similar international assessment, including most recently and in the close future Atlantic walrus, common and grey seals, beluga, narwhal and harbour porpoises. This work benefits greatly from the active participation of scientific experts from Canada, the Russian Federation and USA. It is of great potential importance to CAFF because CAFF was established as a distinct forum for the exchange of data and information on issues such as shared species and habitats and to collaborate as appropriate for a more effective research, sustainable utilization and conservation.

Sustainable utilization:

NAMMCO and the Arctic Council share the common goal of promoting cooperation and coordination of stakeholders on issues related to sustainable development and sustainable utilisation. Marine mammals are important resources for the peoples of the Arctic, and will continue to be a significant element in future discussions on environment and development in the Arctic. Close collaboration between NAMMCO and the Arctic Council can provide opportunities to explore these issues in greater depth through joint projects and events.

General interest:

NAMMCO is hoping both to contribute to, and benefit from, the work of the Arctic Council and the programmes and projects under its auspices. The exchange of observers is an effective way of ensuring a flow of information and the sharing of ideas. It also contribute to the two organizations avoiding parallel efforts by increasing the coordination of overlapping activities, for the benefit of both.

Maintaining formal observer relations between NAMMCO and the Arctic Council fosters good cooperative relations between the two organisations. NAMMCO's expertise on marine mammal resources both scientifically and from a management viewpoint will continue to be a valuable source of reliable and factual information of benefit to the on-going work of the Arctic Council and its Working Groups.