

ICR(09)4

Draft Report of the Eighth Meeting of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board

Rica Seilet Hotel, Molde, Norway

Monday 1 June, 2009

1. Opening of the meeting

1.1 The Chairman, Dr Ken Whelan, opened the meeting and welcomed members of the Board, their scientific advisers and representatives of the accredited NGOs to Molde.

1.2 A list of participants is contained in Annex 1.

2. Adoption of the agenda

2.1 The Board adopted its agenda, ICR(09)8 (Annex 2).

3. Election of Officers

3.1 The Board unanimously re-elected Dr Ken Whelan as its Chairman for a further two year period.

4. Report of the Scientific Advisory Group

4.1 The Chairman of the Board's Scientific Advisory Group (SAG), Dr Lars Petter Hansen, presented a report on the Group's meeting, SAG(09)xx (Annex 3). The SAG had reviewed the updated inventory of research, received a report from its inventory Review Group, reviewed applications for potential funding by the Board, reviewed progress in implementing the SALSEA Programme and considered plans for the 2011 'Salmon Summit'.

4.2 He advised the Board that for 2009, 47 ongoing projects had been included in the inventory with an annual expenditure of approximately £6 million. Six new projects had been included since the last update including information for the sampling programme at St Pierre and Miquelon. The Board agreed that there should be an opportunity to further review the information in the inventory and that any necessary amendments should be provided to the Secretariat by 1 July. Thereafter, the inventory would be made available on the Board's website, www.salmonatsea.com.

4.3 The SAG Chairman reported on a review of the inventory that had been carried out by a Sub-Group to identify areas where there may be merit in encouraging improved coordination of research and to highlight gaps in the research programme where new work might significantly benefit the SALSEA Programme and which might be considered for funding by the Board. The Sub-Group had highlighted a number of

workshops and study groups which might be considered for support by the Board to allow the participation of expert scientists who might not otherwise be involved. The Sub-Group had also made some suggestions for improvements to the presentation of the inventory that would facilitate future reviews. The SAG had recommended that it would be useful to conduct a further review in 2011 when the marine survey component of the SALSEA Programme would be completed. At that stage, it would be valuable to conduct a further review of the inventory and of the SALSEA plan to identify gaps in the research programme and to assist the Board in developing its future research priorities. The Board agreed to this approach.

- 4.4 He indicated that the SAG had developed a framework for assessing project proposals and used this to assess five projects that had been submitted to the Board. The SAG's assessments of whether or not the Board should support the variations proposals for support are as follows:

SAG(08)5 Changes in trophic levels of Atlantic salmon through the marine phase of their life-cycle. ***Support by IASRB.***

SAG(08)6 Inferring temperature history of Atlantic salmon at sea based on oxygen isotope ratios in otoliths. ***Support by IASRB***

SAG(08)7 Food availability of Atlantic salmon post-smolt during their marine phase. ***Support by IASRB.***

SAG(08)8 A study of the relationship between ocean climate and inter-annual variation in adult summer migration distribution patterns of Atlantic salmon in Irish coastal waters over three decades. ***Important project proposal but is outside current IASRB priorities.***

SAG(09)4 Application to NASCO's International Atlantic Salmon research Board (IASRB) to support research on salmon post-smolts in the Irminger Sea, Southwest of Iceland. ***SAG supports plan to sample in Irminger Sea but insufficient details of how funds will be used.***

- 4.5 In addition, the SAG recommends that the Board support the expert participation in the follow-up workshop on historical tagging information (WKLUSTRE - one GIS expert: £2,000) and the follow-up meeting of the biological characteristics Study Group (SGBICEPS – two experts: £4,000). With regard to the proposal for a workshop on scale microchemistry standardization the SAG wishes to seek additional information on the proposal.

- 4.6 The Board recognised that some of the projects evaluated by the SAG had been submitted with a view to seeking funds from the Board, while others were merely seeking endorsement from the Board and support in obtaining funds from other sources.

- 4.7 The SAG Chairman advised the Board that the SAG was aware that NPAFC had indicated that it would not now wish to be a Co-Convenor of the 2011 'Salmon Summit' because of economic issues and NPAFC had recently held a major international symposium on its BASIS research programme and there would be little new information available by 2011. While this was regrettable the SAG believed that the change would allow for additional focus on Atlantic salmon and more time

available for presentation of the findings of the SALSEA Programme. There could still be input from the Pacific through inviting a number of keynote speakers to participate. The Secretary indicated that the possibility of sponsorship of the symposium had been explored and the initial response had been positive. The Board asked that the Steering Committee commence planning for the symposium in conjunction with ICES.

5. The SALSEA Programme

(a) Review of progress in implementing SALSEA

5.1 The Chairman referred to the fact that the SALSEA Programme encompassed the entire North Atlantic with separate components in the North-East Atlantic (SALSEA-Merge), the Northwest Atlantic (SALSEA-North America) and at West Greenland (SALSEA-West Greenland). He presented an overview of progress in implementing the SALSEA Programme (Annex 4). More detailed summaries of progress are contained in the report of the SAG (Annex 3).

5.2 The Board was advised that it had not been possible to implement the extended sampling programme at West Greenland in 2009. Concerns had been raised that the extended sampling could lead to an increase in the internal-use fishery. A range of options is being considered to ensure that it is possible to ensure that the sampling can proceed in 2009. The Board indicated that as there is a NASCO international sampling agreement for West Greenland the governments concerned should be able to resolve the difficulties that had been encountered in 2008. The scientific coordinator, Tim Sheehan, indicated that one option would be for the samplers to purchase the whole, fresh fish direct from the fishermen and then seek reimbursement from the Greenland Nature Institute which would receive the funds from the US government. An alternative would be for the US samplers based in Nuuk to pay the fishermen for the samples and then seek reimbursement with their travel claims. The Board stressed the importance of finding a mechanism to allow the extended sampling to be conducted in 2009 and that assistance from the Greenland Home Rule Government should be sought.

(b) Review of progress in promoting SALSEA

5.3 The Chairman referred to the progress that has been made in promoting SALSEA and indicated that the Board's new website had been very well received. The challenges now were to increase awareness of the website and to ensure that information is made available in a timely fashion from all the SALSEA projects to update the site. In this regard the NGO's had an important role to play in establishing links to the Board's website from their own websites.

5.4 It was noted that the ultimate outputs from each component of SALSEA should lead to management actions to benefit salmon. A major deliverable from the SALSEA programme is the 'Salmon Summit' scheduled for Spring 2011 which in addition to allowing for presentation of the enormous amount of new scientific information which is being generated through SALSEA will also include time for review of the management implications of the findings. In this regard it was noted that the funding for SALSEA-Merge had been delayed and it is possible that the completion date of the project may be extended to August 2011.

(c) Coordination of SALSEA

5.5 The Board noted that the SAG had reviewed progress in improving coordination of the SALSEA Programme (se Annex 3).

(d) Future actions

5.6 The Secretary noted that SALSEA is a three year programme and that there would be a need to consider how to proceed at that time. In particular, a large amount of new data will have been generated through the SALSEA research that may need additional funding to allow it to be analysed. There may be foundations willing to support such analyses and he suggested this matter be given further consideration next year.

6. Finance and administrative issues

6.1 The Secretary presented the Board's audited accounts, ICR(09)2. He indicated that after allowing for expenditure in the year to date and the existing funding commitments there was a balance remaining of around £25,000. He suggested that it would be prudent to retain this as a reserve. He noted that with very limited seed corn money the Board had been extremely successful in generating substantial funds to support the SALSEA Programme and in this regard the Board could be justifiably proud of its achievements.

6.2 The Chairman noted that the Board had received both internal and external sources of income and the latter had been very significant. Given the level of existing resources he believed it would be unwise to commit to funding additional projects at this stage. He noted that it had not been possible to fund all aspects of the SALSEA Programme and that the research today was generating other opportunities for important research. There may, therefore, need to be further fund-raising activities in support of the programme. He referred to the discussions at the Board's last meeting and the need to ensure that it was adequately funded. He noted that the owners of the Board are the Parties and NGOs and there is a need to ensure that sufficient funds are available to administer the Board and allow it to continue to work effectively. He asked that the Board consider two approaches to funding. First, he asked the Parties and NGOs to consider if they would be able to make funds available to the Board in blocks of £10,000. Second he suggested that a small Group be established comprising the Chairman of the Board, the Secretary, the NASCO President, a representative of the NGOs and three representatives from the Parties to develop innovative approaches to raising funds to support the work of the Board. The Board agreed to this proposal. Raoul Bierach (Norway) and Alan Gray (EU) were appointed to serve on the Group and the NGOs and the US agreed to nominate a representative.

6.3 The Board agreed that it should maintain a reserve of around £25,000 rather than allocate these to the new projects identified by the SAG for potential support from the Board. The representative of Norway agreed to contribute the sum of £6,000 to support the workshops identified by the SAG for support by the Board. The NGOs noted that it was difficult for them to come up with block donations. He referred to the request for funding for the SALSEA-Irminger Sea project which is scheduled to be conducted in July 2009 and for which a sum of approximately £25,000 had been sought from the Board. He indicated that the NGOs would look into the possibility of raising funds to support this important component of the SALSEA Programme. The Chairman thanked Norway and the NGOs for their support.

7. Other business

7.1 There was no other business.

8. Report of the meeting

[8.1 The Board agreed a report of its meeting.]

9. Date and place of next meeting

9.1 The Board agreed to hold its next meeting in conjunction with the Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting.

9.2 The Chairman thanked participants for their contributions and closed the meeting.