



International Atlantic Salmon Research Board
Call for Views on the Vision, Scope and Purpose of the Board

ICRIS(23)02

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to seek views on the Board's vision, scope and purpose, the priorities the Parties have for the Board, and on a number of other issues, as agreed at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

Background

The full background to this exercise is laid out in the document 'Background Paper for the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Board', ICRIS(23)01.

The task before the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (the Board) is to, [ICR\(22\)15](#):

1. Consider its overall vision, scope and purpose;
2. Identify the priorities the Parties now have for the Board;
3. Consider establishing a process for requesting and reviewing proposals; and
4. Assess whether the funding available to the Board is commensurate with its vision, scope and purpose.

This paper has been prepared by a Working Group comprising the Secretariat, Chair of the Board and Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) Chair.

Board members and the representative of the NGOs are each invited to submit a paper outlining their views related to the task. Board members are asked to consult with their SAG member to ensure that the SAG's views are taken into account.

To help Board members in preparing their paper, questions are included below. This provides a framework for responses, should members wish to use it.

Next Steps

- once Board members and the representative of the NGOs have submitted their papers, the Working Group will collate the views and outline possible ways forward; and
- the future vision, scope and purpose of the Board will be considered at an Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Board early in 2023.

1. THE VISION, SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE BOARD

The Board has been asked to consider its overall vision, scope and purpose.

The current vision, scope and purpose of the Board seems to be set out in Paragraph 1 of the 'Terms of Reference for the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board and its Scientific Advisory Group', [ICR\(20\)03](#).

'1. The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board (the Board) is a body, established by and reporting to the Council of NASCO, to promote collaboration and co-operation on research into the causes of marine mortality of Atlantic salmon and the opportunities to counteract this mortality.'

In 2020, the Board confirmed that 'survival at sea is still a principle focus for the Board's work'. This was confirmed when the recommendations of the 'Report of the Working Group

to Review the SALSEA-Track Programme and the Inventory’, [ICR\(20\)07](#), were accepted by the Board.

QUESTION 1

Are you content with the current vision, scope and purpose of the Board, as set out in Paragraph 1 of the Terms of Reference, [ICR\(20\)03](#)?

If not, how should it change?

2. IDENTIFY PRIORITIES FOR THE BOARD

The Board has been asked to identify the priorities the Parties now have for the Board.

Parties may have scientific priorities, priority activities for the Board, and / or other priorities.

Scientific Priorities

There appear to be no explicit scientific priorities for the Board, at the moment.

However, the Board may wish to endorse / support research with a particular focus.

For example, in the Research Inventory, projects are allocated to five topic areas:

- i. Long term monitoring: e.g. time-series of marine survival / growth estimates;
- ii. Life history / biological processes: e.g. freshwater factors; pre-fishery-recruitment factors;
- iii. Distribution / migration in the sea: e.g. post-smolt surveys; migratory behaviour;
- iv. Development of methods: e.g. post-smolt survey methods; electronic tag technology; and
- v. Specific natural and anthropogenic factors: e.g. fish farms; predation; obstructions.

Additionally, the Board may wish to give priority to major multi-disciplinary and collaborative research projects.

For example, the Board accepted the recommendations of the ‘Report of the Working Group to Review the SALSEA-Track Programme and the Inventory of Research Relating to Salmon Mortality in the Sea’, [ICR\(20\)07](#). It recommended that any successor to SALSEA-Track should have the following attributes: be problem focused with a clearly defined internationally relevant question, which was not solely developed based on the newest technology available; have clear SMART objectives; have clear timelines; have a clear budget; be at the basin-scale; and have an identified owner / co-ordinator. Additionally, it should address issues such as: data gaps / climate change / commonalities across the jurisdictions / mechanisms for supporting new technologies.

Whilst this recommendation related specifically to a successor to SALSEA-Track, Parties may consider these criteria to be relevant more broadly.

QUESTION 2

Do you think the Board should identify scientific priorities?

What should these scientific priorities be?

Priority Activities

Paragraph 2 of the Terms of Reference and its sub-paragraphs set out the activities of the Board. The Board may wish to consider which of these might be prioritised, and whether other activities should be given priority.

Paragraph 2 states:

'2. The Board will oversee, administer, and seek to advance an International Atlantic Salmon Research Programme into the causes of marine mortality of Atlantic salmon and the opportunities to counteract this mortality through the following activities:'

However, since the demise of SALSEA-Track Programme, it could be considered that the Board does not 'oversee, administer, and seek to advance an International Atlantic Salmon Research Programme'.

The 'Report of the Review of the Metadatabase of Salmon Survey Data and Sample Collections of Relevance to Mortality of Salmon at Sea', [ICR\(22\)03](#), stated that 'a temporary lull between signature projects need not be cause for concern'.

QUESTION 3

Do you think that the Board should 'oversee, administer, and seek to advance an International Atlantic Salmon Research Programme', as set out in Paragraph 2 of the Terms of Reference, [ICR\(20\)03](#)?

Please add any further comments, if you wish.

The sub-paragraphs of Paragraph 2 set out specific activities of the Board. Some have not been conducted for some time. In the section below, where each activity is considered, letters have been added to the sub-paragraphs of current ToR 2 for ease of reference.

a) maintaining an inventory of relevant research projects (the Inventory) that are ongoing or planned and for which budgets have been confirmed;

- the Inventory was reviewed in 2020, [ICR\(20\)07](#). The Board agreed that the Inventory should be simplified and should continue to be updated annually.
- despite this very recent review, some Board members have questioned whether the Inventory should seek to be more comprehensive, such as including projects provided by NGOs and / or academics.

QUESTION 4

Do you think that the Board should continue to maintain the Inventory, as per the decisions taken after the 2020 Review?

Please add any further comments, if you wish.

b) identifying research needs;

- the Board has not identified research needs for some time. This may indicate that this activity is not a priority for the Board. It is unclear what purpose this activity might have, in light of the lack of funds. It is also unclear whether the Board has the capacity to conduct this activity.

QUESTION 5

Do you agree that the Board should no longer seek to identify research needs?

Please add any further comments, if you wish.

c) evaluating the Inventory against research needs;

- the Board has not evaluated the Inventory against research needs for some time. This may indicate that this activity is not a priority for the Board. It is unclear what purpose this activity might have, in light of the lack of funds. It is also unclear whether the Board has the capacity to conduct this activity.

QUESTION 6

Do you agree that the Board should no longer seek to evaluate the Inventory against research needs?

Please add any further comments, if you wish.

d) identifying gaps in the Inventory and setting priorities for further research;

- the Board has not identified gaps in the Inventory or set priorities for further research for some time. This may indicate that this activity is not a priority for the Board. It is unclear what purpose this activity might have, in light of the lack of funds. It is also unclear whether the Board has the capacity to conduct this activity.

QUESTION 7

Do you agree that the Board should no longer seek to identify gaps in the Inventory and set priorities for further research?

Please add any further comments, if you wish.

e) providing a forum for co-ordination of relevant research efforts by the Contracting Parties of NASCO;

- the Annual Meeting of the Board, and the research updates provided, could enable the co-ordination of research efforts by the Parties. Similarly, the provision of information via the Inventory could aid co-ordination of research efforts.
- the Board could take a more active role in this, in the near or longer term, if circumstances changed.

QUESTION 8

Do you think that the Board should provide a forum for co-ordination of research efforts by the Parties? If, so how?

Please add any further comments, if you wish.

f) developing administrative mechanisms to accept financial contributions to an International Atlantic Salmon Research Fund (the Fund); and

g) soliciting and accepting financial contributions and managing the Fund;

- the International Atlantic Salmon Research Fund (the Fund) has been established and continues to accept financial contributions from Parties. The Secretary manages the Fund. For your information, the Financial Rules for the Fund, ICR(03)13, are attached as Annex 1.

- in recent years, the Fund has received contributions from the EU for [SMOLTrack Projects](#); from the US for SALSEA-Track / ROAM and Canada for funding sampling at West Greenland;
- funds are currently not ‘solicited’. The ‘Guidelines on Acceptance of Voluntary Contributions to the International Atlantic Salmon Research Fund’, ICR(03)12, are attached as Annex 2.

QUESTION 9

Do you think that the Board should continue to accept financial contributions and manage the Fund?

Please add any further comments, if you wish.

h) establishing terms and conditions for soliciting, evaluating, approving and funding relevant research projects;

This is considered in Section 3. Please include comments related to this activity in your response to Question 12.

i) funding approved projects and reviewing results in relation to the objectives of the Programme; and

- the Board does not currently approve / fund projects, or review results of funded projects in relation to its objectives.

This is considered in Section 3. Please also include comments related to this activity in your response to Question 12.

j) endorsing projects that are consistent with the objectives of the Programme.

- in 2022 the Board endorsed a ‘Proposal for a SNP genetic baseline to assign Atlantic salmon sampled at Greenland’, [ICR\(22\)08](#). No funding was provided.

QUESTION 10

Do you agree that the Board should continue to endorse projects that are consistent with the objective / purpose?

Please add further comments, if you wish.

Other Priorities

Scientific priorities and priority activities have been discussed above. However, you may wish to identify other priorities for the Board.

QUESTION 11

Do you wish to identify other priorities for the Board?

Please add further comments, if you wish.

3. A PROCESS FOR REQUESTING AND REVIEWING PROPOSALS

The Board has been asked to consider establishing a process for requesting and reviewing proposals. Sub-paragraph h) of current ToR 2 relates to this.

h) establishing terms and conditions for soliciting, evaluating, approving and funding relevant research projects;

- previously, the Board had established terms and conditions for activities supported by the Board, [ICR\(09\)10](#). However, this was related to the SALSEA Programme and is now out of date.
- the Report of the Review of the Metadatabase, [ICR\(22\)03](#), stated that:
‘the Working Group felt that the Board’s role in accepting project proposals, reviewing them and determining whether they should be endorsed or funded was unclear... It was felt that the process around the consideration of project proposals may appear ad hoc and that more clarity around this element of the Board’s work may be useful.’

QUESTION 12

Do you agree that the Board should develop a document which clarifies its role in accepting project proposals, reviewing them and determining whether they should be endorsed or funded?

Please add further comments, if you wish.

4. FUNDING FOR THE BOARD

The Board has been asked to assess whether the funding available to the Board is commensurate with its vision, scope and purpose.

The 2021 Accounts for the International Atlantic Salmon Research Fund, [ICR\(22\)06](#), show the funding available to the Board. There are currently a number of ring-fenced funds, and approximately £5,500 that is not ring-fenced.

It may be premature to ask whether the funding available to the Board is commensurate with its vision, scope and purpose, since discussion of its vision, scope and purpose is underway! However, if you would like to comment at this stage, please feel free to do so. This will be discussed during the inter-sessional meeting in early 2023.

QUESTION 13

Do you have any comments, at this stage, on whether the funding available to the Board is commensurate with its vision, scope and purpose.

Please add further comments, if you wish.

Secretariat
Edinburgh
8 November 2022

ICR(03)13

Financial Rules of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Fund

Rule 1: Applicability

- 1.1 These Rules shall govern the financial administration of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization's International Atlantic Salmon Research Fund (hereafter referred to as "the Fund"). The principal purpose of the Fund is to provide financial support for research to identify and explain the causes of marine mortality of salmon and the opportunities to counteract this mortality.
- 1.2 In these Financial Rules the word 'Secretary' shall refer to the Secretary of NASCO. The Board may decide at some future date, with the agreement of the Council of NASCO, to appoint its own Secretary.

Rule 2: Financial Year

- 2.1 The financial year shall be the period from 1 January to 31 December.

Rule 3: Budget

- 3.1 The Secretary shall prepare a draft budget comprising estimates of income and of expenditure for the Fund for the ensuing financial year and commitments made for future expenditures in subsequent years.
- 3.2 The draft budget shall include an estimate of the financial implications for subsequent financial years.
- 3.3 The Secretary shall submit the draft budget to all members of the Board at least 60 days prior to the start of the financial year.
- 3.4 The draft budget shall be presented in UK currency.
- 3.5 The Board shall adopt its budget by consensus.

Rule 4: Payments from the Fund

- 4.1 The Secretary, on behalf of the Board, is authorised to make payments from the Fund provided such payments are consistent with the decisions of the Board.
- 4.2 The administrative costs of operating the Programme (including the Fund) shall be budgeted for initially by the Council of NASCO but once adequate funding is in place these costs shall be met from the Fund.

Rule 5: Contributions

- 5.1 The Fund shall be established as a Special or Trust Fund in accordance with NASCO's Financial Rule 6.1 in order to hold voluntary contributions above and beyond NASCO members' budget contributions and contributions by individuals or other interested parties. Contributions by non-NASCO members shall only be accepted if they comply with the Board's guidelines on acceptance of voluntary contributions.
- 5.2 The Fund shall be able to accept payments which may be spent in full, or endowments in which only the interest accruing may be spent.
- 5.3 The Fund may carry over its resources from one year to the next or to future years.

Rule 6: Custody of Funds

- 6.1 The Secretary shall designate a bank or banks in the United Kingdom in which the funds shall be kept and shall report the identity of the bank or banks to the Board.
- 6.2 The Secretary may make short-term investments of monies not needed for the immediate requirements of the Board. Such investments shall be restricted to securities and other investments issued under Government guarantee or interest-bearing accounts operated by the bank where the Organization's account is held. The details of investment transactions and income derived shall be reported to the Board.
- 6.3 In the case of contributions received for the explicit purpose of creating endowments, the Secretary shall take appropriate financial advice and invest accordingly.

Rule 7: Internal Control

- 7.1 The Secretary shall:
 - (a) cause all payments to be made on the basis of supporting vouchers and other documents which ensure that the research work, the goods or the services have been received and that payment has not previously been made. However, staged payments may be made for long-term research in progress;
 - (b) designate officers who may receive monies, incur obligations and make payments on behalf of the Board;
 - (c) maintain and be responsible for internal financial control.

Rule 8: Accounts

- 8.1 The Secretary shall ensure that appropriate records and accounts are kept of the transactions and affairs of the Fund and shall do all things necessary to ensure that all payments out of the Fund are correctly made and properly authorised.
- 8.2 The Secretary shall submit to the members of the Board, not later than 15 February immediately following the end of the financial year, annual financial statements. The Secretary shall also give such other information as may be appropriate to indicate the financial position of the Fund. These financial statements shall be prepared in a form approved by the Board after consultation with the external auditor.
- 8.3 The accounting transactions of the Fund shall be recorded in UK currency.
- 8.4 The annual financial statements shall be submitted by the Secretary to the external auditor.

Rule 9: External Audit

- 9.1 The Fund shall be audited in accordance with NASCO Financial Rule 11 by the auditor to NASCO at the time the Organization's accounts are audited.

Rule 10: Acceptance of Annual Financial Statements

- 10.1 The Board shall, following consideration of the audited annual financial statements and audit report submitted to its members, signify its acceptance of the audited annual financial statements or take such other action as it may consider appropriate.

ICR(03)12

Guidelines on Acceptance of Voluntary Contributions to the International Atlantic Salmon Research Fund

Voluntary contributions offered by individuals or other interested parties in accordance with NASCO's Financial Rule 7.2 may be accepted to the International Atlantic Salmon Research Fund provided:

- (1) that the Board shall decide if the purpose of the contribution is consistent with the purpose of the Fund;
- (2) that voluntary contributions from individuals or other interested parties may be accepted for research in relation to the causes of marine mortality of Atlantic salmon and the opportunities to counteract this mortality. (Provided this criterion and criterion 1 are met, a donor may direct the contribution to specific research);
- (3) that those offering the voluntary contribution recognize that acceptance of the contribution does not signify that the Board endorses the products, aims or objectives of those making the donations;
- (4) that those offering the voluntary contributions may not attach conditions to the contribution that are inconsistent with the rules and procedures of the Board;
- (5) that voluntary contributions do not confer any rights to participate in or influence the general work of NASCO;
- (6) that those offering voluntary contributions may not use NASCO's or the Board's name and/or logo without prior approval from the Secretary; they may, however, indicate their general support for the objectives of NASCO or the Board;
- (7) that those offering voluntary contributions accept these conditions in writing prior to the contribution being accepted.