

Terms of Reference for the 5th Meeting of Scientific Experts on Fish Stocks in the Central Arctic Ocean

It is proposed that the 5th meeting of scientific experts on Fish Stocks in the Central Arctic Ocean (CAO) will be held in the first half of 2017 to allow some fieldwork to begin in 2018.

Invitations are made to the European Union and the 9 States participating in the meetings on high seas fisheries in the central Arctic Ocean (the “Parties”) requesting 3-4 participants each, including managers and scientists who are familiar with 1) the information necessary to support management and conservation of Arctic marine living resources, and/or 2) the logistics necessary to support the Joint Program of Scientific Research and Monitoring. Arctic indigenous peoples should also be included among the participants, where relevant. Invitations will also be made to interested bodies including the Arctic Council (PAME/CAFF/AMAP), NEAFC, PAG, PICES/ICES, Inuit Circumpolar Council, and other subject matter experts.

Based on the draft framework for implementation developed during the 4th Meeting, completion of the implementation plan for the Joint Program of Scientific Research and Monitoring will require participants in the 5th meeting to:

1. Design a 1-3 year long mappingⁱ program:
 - 1.1. By defining the spatial and temporal scope for sampling
 - 1.2. By defining methods and the scientific approach (type of sampling and scales) for new CAO research cruises to fill gaps
 - 1.3. Such that the Program incorporates:
 - 1.3.1. Existing surveys by the 10 governments (use, to the extent possible, existing research and monitoring programs),
 - 1.3.2. Additional groups with existing research/monitoring programs, and
 - 1.3.3. Relevant indigenous and local knowledge
2. Design a monitoring program.
 - 2.1. By identifying and defining potential monitoring areas and indicators-
 - 2.2. Such that the Monitoring programs makes use of:
 - 2.2.1. Existing monitoring programs to the extent possible, including government, community-based and academic programs, and
 - 2.2.2. Relevant indigenous and local knowledge
3. Identify human, financial, vessel/equipment resources needed for mapping and monitoring
4. Develop data collection, sharing, and hosting protocols that outline the details of what and how data shall be collected, shared, and hosted for consideration by the Partiesⁱⁱ

ⁱ Mapping here refers to delineation of the spatial extent of species, irrespective of abundance and habitat characteristics, including physical and biological oceanographic conditions and trophic interactions

ⁱⁱ Draft protocol by Canada and US to be available a month before the meeting.