



Social Science Planning Team

REPORT

March 4, 2021

Online Meeting

On March 4, 2021 the Social Science Planning Team (SSPT) held meeting online via the Adobe Connect platform. The meeting agenda, all presentations and other meeting materials are posted on the [eAgenda](#).

Members in attendance: Steve Kasperski (AFSC; chair), Sarah Marrinan (NPFMC; coordinator), Courtney Carothers (UAF), Kate Haapala (NPFMC), Mike Downs (SSC), Scott Miller (NMFS), Seth Macinko (URI), Michael Fey (AKFIN), Marysia Szymkowiak (AFSC), and Sam Cunningham (NPFMC)

Members absent: Matt Riemer (UC Davis; SSC)

Others in Attendance:

Jason Anderson	Bob Foy	Dan Lew	Mateo Paz-Soldon
Julie Bonney	Brian Garber-Yonts	Doug Lipton	Mary Beth Tooley
Karla Bush	Shannon Gleason	Steve MacLean	Elizabeth Reed
Rita Curtis	Alan Haynie	Stephanie Madsen	Geana Tyler
Maria Davis	Kaylah Hillery	Heather McCarty	Anne Vanderhoeven
Diana Evans	Aaron Hoffman	Jon McCracken	Jennifer Watson
Ron Felthoven	Sarah La Belle	Alicia Miller	Sarah Wise
Mark Fina	Katie Latanich	James Mize	
Ben Fissel	Jean Lee	Nick Nagengast	

Introductions, roll-call, definitions, review of assignments, and meeting objectives

To begin the meeting, SSPT chair Steve Kasperski gave a [presentation](#) overview of meeting objectives. This SSPT meeting is primarily focused on potential revisions to the Council's Economic Data Report (EDR) programs, and meeting objectives include:

1. discuss the EDR stakeholder workshops and summary report,
2. provide recommendations to the Council on potential EDR program amendments, and
3. discuss next steps for the SSPT.

Steve covered the meeting schedule, definitions, and meeting strategies. He demonstrated several of the resources that the SSPT members could consult in considering these EDRs, including [excel files of EDR categories](#) and a [data mapping exercise](#) which demonstrates how economic data elements (variables) are combined to create the economic performance metrics specified in the implementing Regulatory Impact Review (RIR) for each EDR data collection. He reminded the team about the purpose and functions of statistical data collections in terms of monitoring, explaining and predicting performance metrics. Steve highlighted the current estimates of reporting burden which are required in the Paperwork Reduction Act package NMFS submits to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on a three-year approval cycle for ongoing data collections. The total annual cost and burden cost estimates of the four EDRs average

\$807 per respondent per year for the Amendment 91 EDR, \$1,210 for each Gulf Trawl EDR respondent (\$422 in direct and burden costs to industry per respondent), \$3,415 per Amendment 80 EDR respondent, and \$6,054 per Crab EDR respondent. He then described the different types of management effects we've often asked to measure (i.e., efficiency, equity and stability) and how the four EDR programs may or may not provide performance metrics to measure these management effects.

Economic data collections and uses in other U.S. regions

The SSPT received a [presentation](#) from Doug Lipton (Senior Scientist for Economics at NOAA Fisheries) surveying NMFS economic data collection efforts with special attention to what other regions are doing in this regard. Rita Curtis (Chief of the Economics and Social Analysis Division within the NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology) joined in the Q&A at the end of the presentation.

Using input from regional economic data collection efforts, NMFS Office of Science and Technology has compiled the Commercial Fisheries Economic Assessment Index (CFEAI) covering the years 2001-2020. The CFEAI focuses on collection of data on fixed costs and operating costs, in fisheries around the nation (which represents about 75 fisheries in total). In both categories, the Alaska Region and the Southwest Region were noticeably lagging behind the other NMFS regions. However, across regions, a diversity of methods (and frequency) are used for collecting economic data (e.g., mail surveys, phone surveys, mandatory reporting, voluntary reporting, etc.). For example, Doug mentioned it may not be necessary to collect fixed costs every year, which is the approach taken in some regions such as the Southwest and Northeast.

The uses of these data are similarly diverse: net revenue estimation, cash flow assessments, economic impact analysis (e.g. jobs, sales, etc), regulatory cost/benefit analyses, cost/benefit analyses of proposed projects impacting fisheries (e.g., dam removal), natural resource damage assessments, as well as ecosystem modeling to understand climate change impacts.

In preparation for this SSPT meeting, Doug and Rita had performed a quick survey of other regional science centers' economic data collections. Some of these economic data collections have routine applications in RIRs. They found 23 examples of using collected economic data in management actions. Doug provided some examples such as the Northeast region using the fixed and variable costs collected relative to catch monitoring to analyze different options of electronic monitoring. The Pacific Islands region used trip level operating costs to estimate how endangered or threatened species limits can affect the net returns and the performance of the fleet. He also found 44 examples of using these data in program evaluations (e.g., catch share program reviews). In the other regions, most economic data collection efforts are initiated, designed, collected and analyzed by the Science Centers. Doug mentioned that one of the primary driving forces for initiating these data collections was the need to do adequate RIRs and litigation around insufficient analyses.

Doug also stressed the unanticipated value of economic data collections. He also highlighted the need for collaborative design (Council/Region/Science Center) and coordination across different surveys/collection efforts. He closed his presentation with a call for special attention to environmental justice and environmental equity issues and what data will be required when conducting analyses of these issues.

An SSPT member questioned how NOAA was responding to the new Executive Orders on [racial justice](#) and [environmental justice](#) and memorandum on [Tribal consultation](#) and how NOAA's national or regional plans to address these orders are developing. The answer received was that it is too soon to say, but there may be both national and regional response and guidance. SSPT members questioned whether current EDRs, focused primarily on economic factors, are sufficient to respond to environmental justice issues or

whether the types of data necessary for analysis of environmental justice issues would fit into a different data collection scheme.

EDR Stakeholder Workshop Report and discussion

Katie Latanich (Latanich Consulting) [presented](#) the [EDR Stakeholder Workshop Summary and Themes Report](#) from November 2020. She first reminded the SSPT of the process that has occurred thus far, with a first stakeholder workshop in August to gather ideas and feedback on cross-cutting themes across all four EDR programs. In September, the SSPT convened (virtually) to consider this stakeholder response and determine the next steps for focused stakeholder discussions. Four focused discussions, one specifically for each EDR, occurred in mid to late November of 2020. Katie's first presentation covered Part 1 of the report from November 2020, which is focused on cross-cutting themes across these meetings. The individual EDR program portions of the report were covered in presentations for each program later throughout the day (i.e., Part 2 of Katie's meeting report).

This SSPT report provides a summary of how the tasks were framed for stakeholders. Katie's presentation followed the workshop report closely which includes a thorough description of the discussions and stakeholder response, not repeated in this report.

Each of the focused meetings in November addressed three specific tasks. Task 1 was to review the purpose and need (P&N) statements for relevance and applicability. Task 2 gathered input from stakeholders on opportunities to improve consistency across the four EDRs. Task 3 was a review of the EDR forms and variables to identify issues with the forms and to identify potential improvements in variables or the way information is collected within the forms.

In completing **Task 1** the P&N statement was displayed on screen and each group was given 3-5 minutes to review prior to opening discussion. The review was focused on whether the P&N is the original or not and whether it is still relevant to the Council's needs today. This review sought to determine why or why the P&N is or isn't relevant at present. The second primary question was whether the information collected by the EDR is responsive to the P&N statement and again why and or why not. Context and history was shared with participants to identify how the P&N was developed. *Cross-cutting themes from stakeholder discussion and response is detailed in page 6-8 of the workshop report.*

In completing **Task 2**, improving consistency refers to draft Alternative 3 as follows:

Alternative 3. Holistic changes to EDRs (reconsider existing purpose and need statements).

Option[x]. For example, if the intention is for EDR data to more routinely inform Council decision documents, an EDR that is (relatively) consistent across fisheries may increase the utility for decision-making and analytical purposes while balancing considerations of reporting burden.

Holistic changes would involve revisiting the P&N for each EDR. This task differs from the other two because it was so open ended. There are a number of ways that EDR collections could be structured for more consistency so we left this open ended to encourage the groups to share their own ideas. When introducing this task we retraced the origins of this idea that consistency including the Council's 2019 motion and stakeholders concerns about how and when EDR data is used for analysis and how utility can be limited by inconsistencies and fragmentation.

The groups were prompted with the following questions. What information do stakeholders think would be most valuable to gather consistently across fisheries, and what attributes of a fishery you would like the Council and analysts better understand, and what other ideas and options would you like the Council

consider if they choose to continue exploring the idea of a consistent EDR form? *Cross-cutting themes from stakeholder discussion and response to Task 2 is detailed in page 12 of the workshop report.*

The third and final task focused on close review of the EDR forms and variables. **Task 3** references draft Alternative 2, Components 3 and “x” (placeholder) as follows:

Alternative 2. Smaller changes to existing EDRs (generally, under the current purpose and need statements). Make the following revisions, where needed, in the EDR sections of the crab or groundfish FMPs. (Components not mutually exclusive.)

Component 3. Revise EDR collection period to every (options: 2 years; 3 years; or 5 years)

Component [x]. Any additional small changes to one or more existing EDR programs, for example...

The group discussed the question of how changing the frequency of data collection (every 2,3 or 5 years) would change the burden of data collection and how would it change recordkeeping practices. Then, whether there were other examples of small changes to each sector’s EDR that people thought could reduce burden to them, their business, or their sector? Finally, are there specific questions they find vague or are there questions that they think respondents may be interpreting differently than you do? *Cross-cutting themes from stakeholder discussion and response to Task 3 is detailed in page 14-15 of the workshop report.*

No questions were asked from SSPT members at this time.

Discussion of Crab EDR

Katie Latanich [presented](#) the report summarizing the general findings specific to the Crab EDR workshop. One of the areas of focus at the workshop was about the purpose and need (P&N) statements. For the Crab EDR, a P&N was established along with the first EDR implemented in 2005. In 2012, a new P&N established a revised EDR. The P&N statement for the initial EDR in 2005 was more specific about the information that was intended to be collected by listing a broad range of social and economic objectives, whereas the revised 2012 EDR purpose and need focused on reducing the reporting burden for stakeholders and improving data quality. It was discussed that the workshop, that this has led to a lack of clarity on what the current EDRs are intending to be evaluating. *Additional Crab EDR-specific themes from stakeholder discussion and response are detailed on page 9 and 18-20 of the [workshop report](#).*

One of the topics of discussion by the SSPT around the crab EDR was the use of comment boxes on this and other EDR forms. A SSPT member was interested in how the qualitative information that is presented in these comment boxes is used by analysts. Brian Garber-Yonts (AFSC) noted that comment fields accompany nearly all tables in EDR forms and are used to qualify answers or to note special circumstances. These comments are reviewed and taken into consideration when compiling the data, e.g., by censoring an observation or requiring an imputation. One suggestion for improving the use of comments as part of the EDR process was for respondents to check a box to prompt a call from AFSC or Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) for them to call the respondents. It was also noted that clearer instructions for what to use comment boxes may be useful, although they are fairly well used already.

The SSPT also revisited the issues of the extent to which language from the original P&N statement for the Crab EDR still applies to the current crab EDR and how to ask the Council explicitly for guidance with respect to clarification on the P&N. In particular, the SSPT discussed whether the broad objective for socioeconomic information within the 2005 EDR still applied as the current overall intent of the Crab EDR. A SSPT member noted that NOAA General Counsel clarified that the most recent EDR and its

associated purpose and need statement (from 2012) supersedes the 2005 EDR. Therefore, if the SSPT feels that clarification surrounding the Council's broader socioeconomic objectives associated with the Crab EDR is needed.

The SSPT provided the following recommendations related to the Crab EDR P&N:

The SSPT asks for the NPFMC to clarify its intended scope of analytical objectives for the Crab EDR, specifically the extent to which the original EDR P&N still applies.

The SSPT also discussed the Crab EDRs as a vehicle for collecting crab vessel expenditures across communities. This community-level information would be valuable for exploring questions about the distribution of fishery benefits. It was highlighted that this type of information may be particularly onerous to report in an EDR form, particularly with dollar values. But perhaps there could be a simpler method, like a check box indicating money spent in a community. A SSPT member noted that this type of information is collected by AFSC through voluntary interviews with participants about expenditures across categories and geographic locations, an effort led by Chang Seung. SSPT members stressed how information about economic contributions to specific communities and regions is essential to the capacity to monitor economic stability as mandated. There was discussion about how, even if detailed information is not available, seasonal or annual estimates of proportional expenditures by state, region, and community would still be very valuable to analysts in understanding how fisheries impact local communities and economies.

SSPT members noted that stakeholders need clarity on the current importance and use of the EDRs as they are. In their interpretation of the Issue #2 motion, it appears there is latitude to ask for new things, but anything requested should be clearly justified.

There were some comments from one SSPT member about general EDR burden. The crab program is also the most expensive EDR and it is also an IFQ program not a vessel-based program, however the catcher vessel EDRs are required at the vessel level. The Council may wish to consider equity of burden as there are some participants in the Crab Rationalization program without EDR reporting requirements (such as QS holders) as well as participants in other rationalized sectors that don't have EDR reporting requirements at all.

The SSPT also discussed some of the more specific changes to existing forms. In particular, some stakeholders had highlighted potential discrepancies in "pounds sold" as reported landings may differ from the basis on which crew are compensated, compared to what is reported in fish tickets. There may be a way to specify these questions more clearly. Additionally, gathering more information on joint ownership of active vessels and QS holders may help researchers highlight active participation in the fishery. Rather than suggesting specific language at this time for the crab forms, the SSPT recommended these issues be considered with AFSC working in collaboration with industry. However, in order for these types of changes to occur, they must be considered through the Council process. Thus, the SSPT made the following recommendations for smaller changes to the crab EDR:

Additional component for Crab EDR changes under Alternative 2:

- a) Assess modifications to Table 1 (Ex-vessel sales) and Table 2 (Quota lease costs) to account for inconsistencies associated with ex-vessel sales and IFQ lease costs as reported in crab EDR forms compared to 1) the gross revenue basis for crew settlements and 2) NMFS Alaska Region records of vessel landings and IFQ permit deductions.**

- b) Assess modifications to crab CV and CP forms to associate joint ownership of active crab vessel and QS holdings.**

Public Comment

Public comment on EDR revisions were received from Brian Garber-Yonts (AFSC) and Rebecca Skinner (Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association).

Discussion of Gulf Trawl EDR

Katie Latanich [presented](#) an overview of the GOA trawl EDR and sector-specific topics that came up in addition to those highlighted in the presentation on cross-cutting themes. For the GOA trawl EDR, the purpose and need statement anticipates the development of a trawl catch share program, and the Council tabled the development of that program in December 2016. Katie noted that the clear message from this group, including stakeholders and analysts, was that there is a need to revisit the purpose and need statement, given this status. Participants felt the EDR is no longer relevant and has already served its purpose. Stakeholders mentioned concern about resistance to discontinuing a data collection once it's started. In addition, one commented they don't support changing the P&N to make it more relevant. Stakeholders also highlighted concerns around data quality and whether respondents are interpreting and responding to questions similarly, equity in EDR reporting, and equity in burden (e.g. smaller operations do not have the same level of accounting support as larger entities and the burden includes forgone opportunity, including time with family).

Katie described the conversation that arose under the topics of consistency and more detailed sector-specific considerations, both of which are documented in detail in the EDR stakeholder workshop report. *GOA Trawl EDR-specific themes from stakeholder discussion and response are detailed on page 11, 13, and 21-23 of the [workshop report](#).*

One SSPT member pointed out that from their perspective, although this EDR was developed for a particular program which was never implemented, it has been one of the most used EDRs. It has been widely used for crew and community analysis across a wide geography (recently been used in at least six analyses).

The SSPT then considered the EDR purpose and need statement. Similar to what was highlighted in the workshop, the SSPT members felt the Council may wish to revisit this purpose and need to determine whether or not this data collection is still relevant. The SSPT made the following recommendations:

Evaluate current relevance of original P&N for GOA Trawl EDR:

- a. If a limited access privilege program is no longer a potential/pending initiative, discontinue GOA Trawl EDR regulations at 679.110, with the possibility of reinstatement at some future date if a LAPP is under consideration, acknowledging that removing the existing regulations and PRA approval will take time to implement.**
- b. If the Council may consider a limited access privilege program within the next 3-5 years,**
 - i. update P&N to reference key performance metrics needed to monitor changes in social and economic performance related to rationalization/bycatch management program implementation, and**
 - ii. revise CV and processor EDR forms to collect a standard panel of data elements consistent with (to be) established EDR data standards, such that baseline data collection will be maximally continuous with post-amendment data collection.**

- c. Recognizing the utility of the GOA trawl EDR data to recent analyses, consider revising the P&N to match actual uses of the data collection.**
- d. Assess data quality impacts and burden hour reductions from establishing minimum participation requirements to be subject to Gulf Trawl CV and shoreside processing EDR reporting requirements.**

One SSPT member thought 5 years was the appropriate amount of time for considering restarting a program if necessary. They highlighted that the process for implementing a data collection program takes time as well, requires pre-testing, and compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). Therefore, it's hard to implement data collections in a timely manner. Another member commented that we have baseline data for GOA trawl now, but if the Council reconsiders a program 5 years from now, these data may not serve as an effective baseline.

Another SSPT member pointed out that the EDRs have the possibility of reinstatement at some future date if a LAPP is under consideration. The Council could keep this blueprint and decide at that time. There was concurrence from another member who questioned that since this is the case, whether this level of specificity is necessary in a recommendation for future unknown Council action. In response, some members reinforced the point that PRA approval will take time to implement and a warning that restarting a data collection is not a simple or expeditious process (could take at least two years).

If the Council designed a “standard EDR template” this may speed up the process. There was some SSPT discussion about the concept of getting pre-approval by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for standard form questions, such as was recently submitted by NMFS to OMB for national voluntary commercial cost and earnings data collections¹. One member expressed interest in this concept as a way to address other social science data gaps as well, such as basic demographic information and other information that could help us look more holistically at fishery participants, community connections, and tribal participation, recognizing that we can't assess the social and economic dimensions of these programs without basic data. One SSPT member emphasized that having these data is, and likely will become even more, necessary in order to respond to legal requirements for analyzing the impacts of fisheries management. They were supportive of the concept of designing a more general form for fisheries.

One member suggested that, particularly if the data collection is to be continued, perhaps a way to balance the level of burden is to space out the timing of the EDRs. SSPT members spoke to some of the concerns with data quality and representation with a less than annual EDR that is intended to establish a baseline for a rationalization program. For instance, if the LAPP program considered some type of crew participation allocative element, skipping a year could leave some people out.

One member felt that providing the option of ‘c’ within the SSPT’s recommendation was important because even if the Council determines the current purpose and need no longer warranted, these data have proved useful for crew and community analysis in analytical documents for GOA trawl fisheries as well as other fisheries with similar/same vessels. One member highlighted the contrast between recommendation ‘a’ and ‘c’ and that the recommendations suggest SSPT support for a range of options

¹ OMB Control No. 0648-0773, see: <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/DownloadDocument?objectID=105310401>.

This single supporting statement covers that purpose and need for 15 different commercial fisheries voluntary economic surveys across other regions of the U.S. based upon 13 different laws, Executive Orders (EOs), and NOAA Fisheries strategies and policies which require economic analyses.

depending on the Council's interest in GOA trawl rationalization and/or interest in revising the purpose and need statement.

Discussion of Amendment 91 EDR

Katie Latanich [presented](#) an overview of the Amendment 91 EDR and sector-specific workshop discussion. In her presentation she highlighted that both industry and analysts agreed the purpose and need for this EDR should be revisited by the Council. Industry felt the purpose and need are no longer relevant and that the EDR should be discontinued. The group talked about the reporting requirement of the Incentive Plan Agreement (IPA) reports and the relationship of this to the EDR. Participants at the workshop felt the EDRs are duplicative of the IPA requirement and the industry's efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of IPAs. They suggested that the Council could provide feedback on how to improve the IPA report process if it deemed it was not getting the information it needed to assess the program. There was also discussion between participants and analysts about whether the EDRs can provide useful insight into complex bycatch avoidance behavior. Specifically, the compensated transfer report form, which was meant to assess the value of salmon bycatch to the fleet, has never been used. The vessel master survey and vessel fuel survey forms have been routinely completed, but bycatch avoidance behavior is complex, and it's necessary to have realistic expectations of the extent to which it's possible to assess behavioral changes across the fleets from qualitative information at the annual level when catch and bycatch conditions can vary greatly between seasons, vessels, and years.

Katie also described the conversation that arose under the topics of consistency and more detailed sector-specific considerations, both of which are documented in detail in the EDR stakeholder workshop report. *Amend 91 EDR-specific themes from stakeholder discussion and response are detailed on page 13-15 and 27-28 of the [workshop report](#).*

Consistent with views expressed during the stakeholder workshop that the Council may wish to reevaluate the A91 P&N statement, the SSPT made the following recommendation:

Evaluate current relevance of original P&N for A91 EDR:

- a) If P&N is still relevant, initiate a process to identify and develop appropriate data collection requirements (which may/may not include EDR data collection).**
- b) If current P&N is no longer sufficiently relevant to justify continuation of A91 EDR, consider broadening P&N to be consistent with general-purpose catch share program monitoring P&N.**
- c) If P&N is no longer relevant, discontinue A91 EDR regulations at 679.65.**

This recommendation provides a few paths forward, depending on the Council's evaluation of the A91 P&N statement.

There were discussion/ questions about what kind of process option 'a' would constitute. This could be a process in which the AFSC staff would work with the Council and industry to consider ways to achieve the type of information the Council is interested in. For example, outside of the EDR forms it could be that the annual IPA reports are augmented with an additional data request, which would also require regulatory change and PRA approval from OMB. One member mentioned that any efforts to refocus a data collection on costs associated with A91 and salmon bycatch reduction could move with an EDR amendment package or separately, on its own specific track.

Discussion of Amendment 80 EDR

Katie Latanich [presented](#) a short overview of the specific areas of discussion that came up during the Amendment 80 EDR workshop in addition to what was presented in the cross-cutting themes section. This group had fairly in-depth discussion of the utility of EDR data for assessing the incremental impacts of bycatch reduction over time, whether the focus of this EDR should be specifically on the economic impacts of bycatch reduction or more broadly on the economic performance of the fleet. Some participants felt it was important to assess the economic impacts of PSC reductions but questioned whether EDR data helps assess incremental impacts of PSC over time and looking ahead, and whether it can help predict economic impacts associated with abundance-based management for halibut (halibut ABM). One participant commented that it's difficult to ask the right questions and tease out impacts of bycatch reductions. Analysts agreed that it's difficult to assign causality between bycatch reduction measures and costs, but necessary to get to that point to provide useful information about economic performance over time. Some participants felt that if the Council considers changing this purpose and need, a broader focus on general trends in economic performance would be appropriate. Katie also presented on the topics of consistency and more detailed sector-specific considerations, both of which are documented in detail in the EDR stakeholder workshop report. *Amend 80 EDR-specific themes from stakeholder discussion and response are detailed on page 11-12 and 21-24 of the [workshop report](#).*

The SSPT made the following recommendations for smaller changes to the A80 EDR.

Additional component for A80 EDR changes under Alternative 2:

- a. Revise EDR webform to pre-populate data entry fields for EDR, Tables 1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4**
- b. Assess data quality impacts of eliminating days fishing and days processing data elements from Table 2.5**
- c. Assess modifications to Table 4 (Capital expenditures) to distinguish (and potentially exclude) major investment expenditures (e.g. vessel replacement, structural hull modification) from capitalized expenditures associated with routine/cyclical capital maintenance and improvement. Consider potential data quality improvements and burden reductions from a capitalized expenditures EDR module required only every 3 years which covers the prior 3-year period.**

The first option in this list came up as a suggestion through the workshops as a possible way to reduce burden, particularly for responses that don't typically change year-to-year (e.g., vessel characteristics). If there is a change in ownership there may be some challenges with sharing confidential data; however, as an element for consideration, this is something that could be investigated.

The second option considers dropping questions about days fishing and processing elements from the A80 forms as we have adequate data for these areas from other sources (e.g., days fishing from Observer data and days processing from daily production reports).

The last option is an alternative way to collect capitalized expenditures rather than through the annual EDR form. This option would still collect expenditure information from every year, but on a three-year cycle. Brian Garber-Yonts also noted that this method of separating capital expenditures into a separate data collection module could improve data quality by augmenting additional questions about cycles of capital asset replacement. The details of these questions and this approach could be identified with AFSC outreach to industry.

Concluding EDR discussion

One SSPT member described their concerns with the concept of trying to address consistency within the current EDR framework. Since these data collections were all developed independently with different intents (e.g., program level evaluation for LAPPs or bycatch mitigation/ reduction), the goal of consistency is not easily solvable. If the Council is interested in more consistent EDR data collection, this might be achieved through a more holistic approach (e.g., pre-approved forms with a data collection that could be applied to any fleet when a question arises about their economic and social performance)². The current EDR forms are not consistent, and it would be very difficult to make them that way. If the Council wanted to have a consistent EDR program, SSPT discussion highlighted this would be a big task for the SSPT or another group to develop.

One member mentioned that the SSPT can help the Council identify the type of information only available through current EDR programs. This parallels the SSPT's work on the data gap analysis. If the Council were to consider changing the nature of the EDR program, it may consider what information would be useful to characterize through the EDR approach that can only be gathered this way.

For instance, SSPT members noted that there is a void in data able to link communities, crew, and vessels which is regularly necessary for both routine and complex Council analyses. EDRs are unique in achieving this and several members emphasized the value in these data. For other fisheries, this has been a persistent data gap routinely identified by fishery analysts and researchers. Crewmember participation in North Pacific fisheries is only available from the GOA Trawl, Amendment 80, and the crab EDRs which allow analysts to better understand the social and economic footprint of these fisheries across communities.

SSPT members highlighted that the collection of data able to link crew, vessels and communities would be valuable data, although their collection may not be in line with all the current EDR P&N statements. These types of data allow for an understanding of community dependence and participation as required under National Standards and are needed in order to provide analysis to address the analytical questions of program reviews as well as amendment packages. Moreover, these issues may be coming to the forefront with the new Administration's focus on environmental justice concerns. These are the types of data that would be valuable across multiple fisheries. For example, one SSPT member mentioned that many of the unanswered management questions in the 20-year IFQ Program Review could not be answered because we don't have EDR data for those fisheries.

It was acknowledged that the EDR is not the only structure that may work for gathering data on crew, demographic variables and other social information that may be valuable input to the process. It may not be the right tool to fill all social and economic information gaps. For instance, if there was a spot for crew licenses on fish tickets that could be a different tool, or perhaps adding demographic variables to permit/quota ownership data or crew license information could better fulfil these information needs. One SSPT member questioned whether the group would have the latitude to look outside of the federal system. For instance, the lack of a durable identifier for crew is an issue across state and federal fisheries. It limits an analyst's ability to understand crew participation over time, crew retention rates, how often and whether people move in and out of fisheries, and fishery diversification among crew, for example, all of which may be important information in providing the social and economic context for understanding the potential effects of a management change.

However, based on the crab EDR purpose and need statements for example, one member noted it seems like there could be an opportunity to broaden these collections to include more social data within the EDR framework. There are a number of data gaps here and there is a need to think about linked community and demographic considerations. This member wondered what the Council's mandate is to require these of

² As is currently being proposed by NOAA Fisheries for all voluntary commercial economic data collections in the nation: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-11-17/pdf/2020-25345.pdf>.

specific fisheries versus NOAA's responsibility for the various social science products (e.g. community profiles).

One SSPT member highlighted comments that were received from stakeholders that had to do with the duration of these data collections. Stakeholders wondered, relative to evaluating a shift to catch share management, do these data have diminishing returns to understanding management impacts? This SSPT member felt that while there is more 'noise' in the data the older the program becomes as the effects of a management shift are compounded with external impacts on the fisheries, some of these data can still provide relevant fishery trends as valuable context in the Council process. However, maybe the information needed is different/ less extensive than what was originally requested. Perhaps a better approach for older programs would be identifying several variables (or metrics) that demonstrate relevant fishery trends which can be used to tell stories important to the management context. This could also meet the needs of the program reviews on the horizon for 2022/23.

Relative to the concept of a more standardized/ holistic EDR program (as referenced in the Council's "Issue 2" [April 2019 motion](#)), the SSPT made the following recommendation:

Develop a consolidated P&N for Catch Share EDR data collections, addressing generalized analytical/performance metrics; individual EDR forms would employ standardized panels of data elements, specified as appropriate for the respective catch share program and associated management goals, structure of limited access privilege/QS/IFQ, and associated industry sector(s), gear group(s), and other relevant strata/subpopulation(s).

Suboption: EDR form templates would identify performance metrics and associated subpanel(s) of data elements relevant to monitoring pre-amendment baseline economic performance. Council could choose to invoke baseline data collection using pre-defined EDR template(s) when initiating development of CS programs or other large-scale FMP amendments in non-catch share/non-EDR fisheries/sectors in the future.

The intention of this recommendation would be to redesign an economic data collection program with a P&N that spans specific fisheries. Particularly in catch share programs that have existed for a while, the issues that were the primary focus of implementation may not be the same issues the Council is interested in tracking long-term. This option could help analysts generate a basic set of data elements that could be used to generate metrics to evaluate the social and economic performance of the fisheries. While the P&N would be broadly applicable across programs, the data collected would be specified as appropriate for the respective catch share program and associated management goals, with an effort to align questions when possible. As mentioned above, there is an ongoing NOAA Fisheries process to gain a "hybrid-generic" clearance for all national voluntary commercial economic data collections which would provide a suite of approved questions that could relatively quickly be selected from. This would allow a survey to be implemented quickly and cost effectively and also has the added benefit of providing a more consistent, or comparable, set of information across fisheries subject to EDR reporting requirements.

Status of other Council bodies and next steps for the SSPT

For the last agenda item, SSPT members received a series of [presentations](#) from Council staff updating them on the activity of other related Council bodies. There was no specific action required from these updates; the presentations were intended to help SSPT members consider the next steps for the group without duplicating the efforts of other Council bodies.

To begin, Kate Haapala provided the SSPT with an update of the Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge and Subsistence (LKTKS) Taskforce. The goals of this group are to create processes and protocols through which the Council can identify, analyze, and consistently incorporate LKTKS information into decision-making. Kate highlighted the five objectives of the taskforce which are oriented toward creating useful processes and products that will help staff, agency partners and its advisory bodies pursue these goals.

Kate described some of the recent efforts of the taskforce. Thus far, primary products include an authorized workplan and glossary of terms. Additionally, they have made progress identifying existing “onramps” (i.e., points of entry) for LKTKS information into the Council process, protocol development including a tentative outline and twelve high-level guidelines, and a catalogue of sources for identifying and soliciting LKTKS information. Within their consideration of onramps for LKTKS information, Kate highlighted that preliminary recommendations are both relational and analytical. For example, one of the preliminary recommendations is engagement between the Council and tribes. She noted this is important because LK and TK are living sources of knowledge which means that even when research is not available to inform an action, the information may be housed with individuals and communities. Thus, finding ways to build these relationships is key. Other work of the taskforce includes identifying and defining written or multimedia sources of LKTKS information, as well as the social science of LK and TK and subsistence information. So far, the taskforce has produced an extensive draft bibliography of sources. Ultimately, they intend to generate a tool that functions like a search engine; accessible to Council/ agency staff and the public. The taskforce is also considering using Norton Sound red king crab as a case study to ground truth developing protocol and to test how useful and accurate the protocols are.

Next Steve MacLean provided an update on the activity of the Community Engagement Committee (CEC). Steve reminded the SSPT that the CEC was developed in 2018 to help the Council develop a process to augment Council’s outreach, especially to Alaska native communities. The CEC provides recommendations to the Council on engagement (two-way communication) and does not do the outreach itself. The Council took nine actions in Feb 2021 related to the CEC. Among those nine actions, the Council determined the CEC will be reconstituted as a permanent committee. The group will be working on an updated terms of reference.

Kate shared her perspective on overlap and divergence between these different Council bodies, including the role of the SSPT. For instance, the SSPT has a broad focus on social science (e.g., data gap analysis), the CEC is focused on tools and strategies for engagement (not necessarily social science at all), and the Taskforce has a more specific focus on alternative knowledge systems (which may include social science). One SSPT member highlighted that a notable difference with the Taskforce, relative to the other two groups, is the regional focus on the Bering Sea.

SSPT members expressed appreciation for the updates on these Council bodies. **The SSPT supports and appreciates work done by the Taskforce and CEC during a challenging year.**

Sarah Marrinan introduced the question of the next steps for the SSPT. She reminded members of the group’s mission statement and projects to date. She asked members - “being cognizant of the other Council bodies (e.g., the SSC, the CEC, the LKTKS taskforce, etc.) and the desire to not overlap with roles and responsibilities, what are the next steps we can take to meet the charge of the Council’s mission statement for this group?”

One member highlighted that there are a number of new products emerging or existing products evolving (e.g., ESPs, ESRs, SAFEs, ACEPO) and social science data are being incorporated into decision-informing analyses in more ways through these efforts, which is promising. However, with this broadening of applications comes a need for coordination to ensure appropriate data for specific applications and avoid redundancy.

Another member suggested that, in areas of overlapping roles with the Taskforce, it would be beneficial to discuss collaboration on some of these topics around the quality and application of social science as it relates to LKTK and subsistence. The group discussed the possibility of joint or back-to-back meetings with the Taskforce in the future.

Members also expressed interest in the following tasks:

- Continue progress on Data Gap Analysis. Thus far the project has been about identifying all gaps, but not potential uses or improvements for getting information to the Council. Next steps could

include finalizing this document and elevating key gaps. There was also discussion about the possibility of connecting the DGA project to the social science “tools” for using information we have (e.g., ACEPO, ESPs, dashboards, other products that showcase social and economic data, etc) and data gaps that have been highlighted within these products.

- Participate in reconsidering how program reviews are done in the future. There are a number of program review deadlines in 2022 and 2023 and it may be beneficial to consider if there are different considerations for a LAPP when it is being reviewed for a second or third time since its implementation.
- The SSPT made recommendations for further EDR processes and depending on Council response, it may wish to keep the SSPT involved in this process. For instance, if there is development of pre-approved information collection forms for comprehensive data collections across all fleets, the Council may wish to specify the role of staff - e.g., AFSC staff, the AK region staff, as well as if and whether the SSPT should play a continued role in any part of the development or evaluation of EDR processes.