

Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Team

Terms of Reference

Establishment and objective

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has established a Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (BS FEP) Team. The Team will provide strategic support for the Council's goals and objectives for ecosystem-based fishery management (EBFM), as described in the BS FEP. While the focus and prioritization will be on the Bering Sea, the Team will consider the context of the North Pacific in providing ecosystem advice, and will ensure that products with application to other ecosystems or management areas are not unduly limited to the Bering Sea..

BS FEP Team Functions

Specific tasks for the BS FEP team include the following.

1. Strategic guidance for monitoring Bering Sea ecosystem status

- Develop and keep current an appropriate suite of ecosystem indicators specific to the BS FEP's Ecosystem Objectives, to be tracked in the annual Ecosystem Status Report. Note, collaboration may be required for developing appropriate social science indicators.
- Review ecosystem status through recent ESRs and other ecosystem information, report on indicator status for success metrics.
- Provide a strategic review of ecosystem products, red flags, discussion points from the previous fall cycle, particularly with respect to the BS FEP's Ecosystem Objectives. Coordinate with the ongoing AFSC effort to discuss ecological processes in the spring.

2. BS FEP Action Modules

- Provide recommendations on new Action Modules, prepare candidate proposals for ideas for Council consideration (six questions).
- Track progress of ongoing Action Modules, review workplans and recommend staffing, ensure that results are reported to the Council in a way that fosters their use in the management process. Provide appropriate reporting and, if appropriate, recommendations, to the Council and other Council advisory bodies (SSC, Advisory Panel, Ecosystem Committee, others).

3. Maintain the Core BS FEP

- Consider how completed Action Modules inform the Core BS FEP, update as appropriate with new information and Action Module results.
- Consider developing a BS FEP summary of how ecosystem information was used in the specifications process or other Council actions each year.
- Track how information developed as a result of the Council's BS FEP is used in the Council process.

4. Outreach and communication

- Recommend outreach and communication products in support of the BS FEP.
- Provide the Council with periodic overviews of AFSC ecosystem products and research, including progress with use and review of local knowledge (LK) and traditional knowledge (TK) within and alongside natural and social science in the fisheries management process.
- Work collaboratively with other Council Plan Teams.

Organization

Membership

FEP team members will be appointed from government agencies and academic institutions having expertise relating to the Bering Sea ecosystem. The membership should include scientists and managers with diverse expertise, including ecosystem modeling, stock assessment of Bering Sea species, oceanography, seabirds and marine mammals, habitat, social science, and economics. Ideally, the FEP team should represent a diverse group of participants from many different agencies with expertise and management responsibility in the Bering Sea ecosystem, as well as members who also participate on the Council's other Plan Teams for Crab, Groundfish, and the Social Science Planning Team.

Officers, workgroups, and rules of order

The FEP team will be directed by a Chair or Co-Chairs, who are elected from the membership for two year terms. There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms that a Chair may serve.

Workgroups: The team may divide its responsibilities among work groups that are directed by a work group leader.

In general, rules of order will be informal. FEP team decisions will be reached by consensus, whenever possible. The diversity of the team's perspectives on recommendations or statements will be reflected in the publicly available meeting minutes. In representing the SSPT publicly, the

spokesperson will take care to relate SSPT opinions accurately, noting points of concern where consensus cannot be reached.

Meetings

The FEP team will hold an annual in-person meeting that will generally occur in March, in order to facilitate an annual report to the Council in April. The FEP team may also hold another meeting during the year, which may occur by teleconference.

Public participation

FEP team meetings will be open to the public and will be noticed in the Federal Register. Written comment submitted to the FEP team will be accepted until the start of the meeting, and will be available to the Team and the public. Oral testimony during the meeting will be accepted at the discretion of the Chair.

Reporting

A report of each meeting will be prepared by Council staff or designee, which will be reviewed by FEP team members, and revised as necessary before finalized. This report will be made publicly available and will be presented to the Council and its advisory bodies.

Council: The BS FEP is the Council's document, and any policy embodied in the BS FEP, or actions undertaken under the "umbrella" of the BS FEP must all be authorized by the Council. The BS FEP does not have inherent authority, but the BS FEP can provide context for the Council to take action through its existing authority under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

SSC: As the Council's scientific advisory body, any recommendations from the BS FEP Team, or recommendations arising from information undertaken through an Action Module of the BS FEP, will be reviewed by the SSC as per the Council's standard procedure. The SSC may then choose to make recommendations to the Council regarding the BS FEP.

Ecosystem Committee: The Council has designated the Ecosystem Committee with oversight for BS FEP Team's development and ongoing implementation of the BS FEP. The Ecosystem Committee also has an ongoing policy role in advising the Council on EBFM implementation. The Committee will continue to liaise with the BS FEP Team and will provide policy recommendations to the Council on the appropriate direction for the BS FEP and Action Modules. The Ecosystem Committee may also choose to make recommendations to the Council regarding the BS FEP.

Plan Teams: To the extent that BS FEP information affects a particular FMP, that information should be shared with stock assessment authors and the Plan Teams. The Plan Teams may choose to make recommendations to the Council regarding the BS FEP.

Social Science Planning Team (SSPT): The SSPT was established to improve the quality and application of social science data that informs management decision-making and program evaluation in the Council process. Social science considerations are an important component of EBFM, and feedback from the SSPT concerning social science aspects of the Core BS FEP and Action Module projects may be helpful for the BS FEP Team. The FEP Team approached the SSPT in May 2018 about collaborating on Action Module 4, which focuses on assessing and integrating LK and TK into Council processes as relevant, and members have expressed interest in coordinating. The SSPT may choose to make recommendations to the Council regarding the BS FEP.

Community Engagement Committee: The Council created this new Committee in June 2018 to advise the Council on strategies for improving engagement with rural and Alaska Native communities, but at the time of this draft the Committee had not yet met or developed a Terms of Reference. Much of the Council discussion to date that proved to be the genesis of this Committee has evolved from the development of the BS FEP. It is anticipated that engagement strategies and public involvement that is developed and recommended by the Committee will be applied to the BS FEP as well, and there may be other opportunities for collaboration as well. The Community Engagement Committee may choose to make recommendations to the Council regarding the BS FEP.