



Request for Proposals (RFP) - Closing Date: March 31, 2017

**Catch Share Program Review for the
Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog
Individual Transferrable Quota Fisheries**

Purpose

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) is accepting proposals to conduct a Catch Share Program Review of the present and past social and economic conditions in the Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog (SCOQ) fisheries which are managed using individual transferrable quotas (ITQs). Section 303A(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) includes requirements for the regular monitoring and review of the operations of catch share programs by the Council and the Secretary of Commerce.

Background

The Council is one of eight regional councils in the U.S. responsible for developing fishery management plans to prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished fisheries in federal waters. The Councils were established in 1976 following the passage of the MSA, and have played an important role in restoring the health of the nation's fisheries.

In 1977, the Council developed a fishery management plan for the Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries in federal waters. These fisheries were initially managed using a combination of limited entry restrictions, fishing quotas, and time limits to constrain landings and distribute fishing effort throughout the fishing year. In 1990, the Council developed an ITQ program that was implemented by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries. The fisheries have been operating under this program since then.

Several studies have been done to characterize various aspects of these fisheries including fleet profiles, demographic profiles of fishery participants, economic performance, and community profiles. In 2016, there were approximately 100 allocation holders in the SCOQ ITQ fisheries that include those who fish their allocations, hire others to fish their allocations, or lease their allocations to others. Beginning in 2016, ITQ holders were required to complete an ownership declaration form. That information is now available to more clearly identify current participants in the fishery.

Scope of Work

The contractor shall conduct a Catch Share Review that is consistent with the NOAA Fisheries Guidance on Conducting Reviews of Catch Share Programs (draft attached; final pending). The review should cover any necessary data collections and analyses consistent with the NOAA Fisheries Guidance document. The contractor will work with a project oversight team, comprised of staff from the Council



and NOAA Fisheries, to provide the contractor with guidance regarding the Catch Share Review before and during implementation of the project.

Anticipated Term of Contract

The final contract is subject to successful negotiation of the budget and scope of services. It is expected that the contract will have an 18 - 24 month performance period following the date of contract award. The contract will be reviewed during its course and may be extended at the sole discretion of the Council.

Preparation of the Final Report

The contractor shall prepare a final report with an executive summary which provides a concise summary of their findings. The main body of the report shall be consistent with the NOAA Fisheries Guidance document. Any data collected as part of the review will be made available to the Council.

Schedule of Payments

The contractors may invoice one third of the total payment for services when the contract is awarded, one third upon delivery and acceptance of the first progress report, and the remaining one third after the final review report has been reviewed and approved. The timing of these steps will be detailed in the final contract.

Contractor Qualifications

Minimum qualifications should include experience in fisheries economics, social sciences, or natural resource economics with theoretical and empirical expertise in fisheries management and strong skills in data analysis.

Proposal Submission

Interested parties must submit a proposal by close of business March 31, 2017. The proposal may be mailed or emailed to the Council's point of contact listed below.

Proposal Format/Qualifications

- *Executive Summary*: Respondents should provide a summary of their company, organization, institution and any related partners, as well as their qualifications.
- *Qualifications*:
 - *Statement of Qualifications*: In addition to the executive summary, all proposals must include a statement of qualifications, which describes the experience and history of the respondent company, organization, or institution and other team members, if applicable. The proposal should specifically indicate the respondent's current and historical expertise in providing the services identified in this request for proposals (RFP).

- *Staffing Plan and Qualifications:* The proposal should identify the names and qualifications of all key personnel who are to be part of the project team, and provide curriculum vitae for each.
- *References:* All proposals must include a list of public and private clients for whom the firm has provided similar services to those set forth in this RFP. The references must include a contact person, a full address, and a phone number.
- *Proposed Approach and Comments on Scope of Work:* The proposal should include a detailed description of how the review will be conducted, what elements will be analyzed as part of the review, a schedule of tasks to be performed, as well as details regarding management of the project.
- *Proposed Fee Structure (Budget & Rate Sheet):* All responses must include detailed information on the proposed budget for the requested services, including the basis for charges (e.g., hourly rates, fixed fee).

Proposal and Project Timeline

The Council anticipates that the selection of a successful respondent and execution of contract will proceed as described in the following approximate schedule:

1/23/17	Issuance of RFP
3/31/17	Deadline for Proposal Submission
4/30/17	Notify Selected Respondents
5/31/17	Contract Execution (or as soon thereafter as practical)

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on prior experience, references and qualifications, and proposal costs. The Council may, at its discretion, request additional information from any respondents as deemed necessary to clarify or negotiate modifications to the proposal.

Requests for Further Information/Contact

Dr. Chris Moore at cmoore@mafmc.org
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fax (302) 674-5399

Disclaimer

- 1) All costs associated with the preparation and presentation of the proposal will be borne by participating applicants.
- 2) Proposals and their accompanying documentation will not be returned.
- 3) Respondents must disclose any relevant conflicts of interest and/or pending lawsuits.



- 4) The Council reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, negotiate with all qualified applicants, cancel or modify the RFP in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests.

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DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR CONDUCTING REVIEWS OF CATCH SHARE PROGRAMS

I. Introduction

The goal of this guidance is to provide a resource to help ensure the reviews of catch share programs (CSPs) are comprehensive and targeted at meeting statutory requirements; coordinated with stakeholders; carried out in a transparent, efficient, and effective manner; and consistent across the country. This guidance applies to CSPs established by the Regional Fishery Management Councils (Councils) or the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary).¹ This guidance is based on a variety of sources, including the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA),² particularly sections 301, 303, and 303A; the NOAA Catch Share Policy (CS Policy);³ The Design and Use of Limited Access Privilege Programs (LAPPs) (Holliday and Anderson 2007);⁴ reviews that have already been completed (Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Crab Rationalization,⁵ Amendment 80 (BSAI non-pollock Cooperatives),⁶ Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Red Snapper,⁷ and Pacific sablefish permit stacking);⁸ reviews currently underway and interim reports related to such reviews for various CSPs, including Gulf of Alaska (GOA) rockfish,⁹ GOM grouper-tilefish Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQ),¹⁰ Northeast Limited Access General Category Scallops IFQ,¹¹ and Pacific groundfish trawl rationalization,¹² as well as discussions among National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff.

II. Applicability of Guidance

A. Section 303A(c)(1)(G) of the MSA requires the Councils and Secretary to “include provisions for the regular monitoring and review by the Council and the Secretary of the operations of the program, including determining progress in meeting the goals of the program and this Act, and any necessary modification of the program to meet those goals, with a formal and detailed review 5 years after the implementation of the program and thereafter to coincide with scheduled Council review of the relevant fishery management plan (but no less frequently than once every 7 years)” of all LAPPs established after January 12, 2007. This requirement applies to LAPPs established under Secretarial

¹ This guidance is also applicable to Atlantic Highly Migratory Species CSPs established by the Secretary under MSA sec. 304(g).

² http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/magact/MSA_Amended_2007%20.pdf

³ http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/management/catch_shares/about/documents/noaa_cs_policy.pdf

⁴ <http://spo.nmfs.noaa.gov/tm/tm86.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.npfmc.org/crabrationalization/>

⁶ <https://npfmc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=3300713&GUID=DB925E16-602F-41BD-8690-8156BEC4FB82>

⁷ <http://www.gulfcouncil.org/docs/amendments/Red%20Snapper%205-year%20Review%20FINAL.pdf>

⁸ http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Final_FGSPS_PrgmRev.pdf

⁹ http://www.npfmc.org/wp-content/PDFdocuments/catch_shares/Rockfish/RPPreview508.pdf

¹⁰ <https://ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/ifqgt/main.html#>

¹¹ <http://www.nefmc.org/scallops/index.html>

¹² http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/groundfish_catch_shares/index.html

authority as well. The date a program was established is the effective date of the action in the final rule that implemented the program.

B. The CS Policy indicates that periodic reviews are expected of all CSPs, regardless of whether the program is a LAPP or when it was put in place. Thus, the Northeast Multispecies Sector, which is not a LAPP, and CSPs implemented prior to January 12, 2007, should undergo periodic review. The CS Policy states: “NOAA recommends Councils apply the LAPP review and duration principles and requirements to all catch share programs.”

C. Reviews of the Western Alaska (AK) Community Development Program (CDQs) are not covered by this guidance as that program is subject to separate statutory requirements for review, and the state of AK has responsibility for conducting that review.

III. Periodicity of Reviews

A. Initial Reviews. For CSPs established after January 12, 2007, the initial review should be initiated no later than 5 years after the program was implemented (MSA sec. 303A(c)(1)(G)). For CSPs established prior to January 12, 2007, the requirement to initiate the first review 5 years after implementation does not apply. As such, the first review of these CSPs should be initiated no later than 7 years after the CS Policy went into effect (i.e., no later than the end of calendar year 2017), consistent with MSA’s requirement for subsequent reviews.

The MSA does not preclude an earlier review. However, to comply with the MSA requirement or CS Policy, the first formal review should not occur earlier than year 5. The Councils and NMFS should also follow any timelines for additional program reviews specified by the fishery management plan amendment creating the CSP. The Councils and NMFS should be mindful that it takes time for program participants and related entities (e.g., dealers/first receivers, processors, bait/tackle shops, etc.) to adjust to a new program. In turn, there will be a lag between when those behavioral adjustments occur and when they can be discerned, analyzed, and understood.

B. Subsequent Reviews. According to Section 303A(c)(1)(G) of the MSA, all subsequent reviews should coincide with scheduled Council review of the relevant fishery management plan (FMP), but no less frequently than once every 7 years.¹³ Thus, for CSPs established after January 12, 2007, the second review should be initiated before the end of the program’s 12th year, regardless of when the initial review was actually completed. How and when Councils review their FMPs, or parts thereof, varies by Council. The Councils and NMFS should follow any timelines for additional program reviews specified by the Amendment creating the CSP and should not conduct reviews more frequently than every 3 years for the purpose of complying with the MSA requirement or CS Policy.

¹³ As with a new program, if significant changes are made to an existing program, it will take time for program participants and related entities to adjust and lags between when the adjustments occur and can be discerned, analyzed, and understood should be expected.

IV. Process and Procedures

A. Review Plan. Ideally, a general plan for conducting future reviews should be outlined when the CSP is being developed, or as soon as feasible thereafter. This general plan should cover necessary data collections, data analyses/models, a timeline for implementing and/or completing each required task within that plan, as well as staff and funding requirements. Since the review will require data from the first day of the program, and preferably prior to the program's implementation, every effort should be made to ensure the necessary data collection programs are put in place when the program is being developed or implemented. Otherwise, potentially significant data gaps will be created which will later confound the analyses needed for the review. The first year or two of a program is critical with respect to discerning how program participants and related entities are adjusting to the program. Further, data collections associated with CSPs will most likely require Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) clearance, and that process often takes at least 6 months. Similarly, if external assistance is needed to conduct certain analyses, the contracting process can also introduce delays. The content of the general plan should be periodically refined, revised, and updated as additional information becomes available and issues are identified.

The general plan should be converted into a final plan approximately one year prior to initiating the review. This will ensure adequate time is available to conduct any necessary supplementary/specialized data collections and acquire the resources needed to conduct the review, if any. This detailed review plan provides a transparent overview of how the review will be conducted and over what time period, and includes what elements will and/or will not be analyzed as part of the review as outlined in sections V and VI below. Additionally, approval of the review plan by the Council and concurrence from NMFS that the review plan meets the requirements of the MSA should occur at this point.

B. Review Team. Establishment of a review team is an effective way to facilitate the development of the review plan and process. The Council should determine appropriate members for the review team. It would be useful to include members of the Plan Development Team (PDT), or equivalent, who worked on the Amendment implementing or making significant changes to the program, as well as staff responsible for administering or overseeing the program. This will promote continuity in the program's development, implementation, evaluation, and revision process. The Council should consider representatives from the Council, Regional Office, Science Center and Office of Law Enforcement to ensure their respective issues and concerns are appropriately addressed in a timely manner.¹⁴ If needed, external expertise or contract support can be included as part of the review team. The distribution and nature of responsibilities for the review should be clearly identified as early as possible in the process, with the Council determining the "lead" or "co-leads" of the review team. The distribution of appropriate staff, data management responsibilities, and analytical capabilities varies by region and Council. However, each organization should play a role and, to the extent practicable and

¹⁴ For CSPs created under Secretarial authority, team composition will vary to some degree, consistent with the composition of the PDT and staff overseeing the program.

appropriate, assume responsibilities comparable to the roles and responsibilities each assumed in the program development and implementation process.

C. Interim Reports. Regional Offices, Science Centers, and/or Councils have already developed annual or biennial reports for existing catch share programs that should be considered when completing the 5/7 year reviews. These existing annual or biennial reports can serve to refine and revise the review plan and act as important source documents for the 5/7 year review.¹⁵ Further, the annual/biennial reports could be used to identify gaps in the available data and analyses and other unforeseen issues, in turn allowing time for these gaps to be filled and issues addressed prior to the conduct of the more formal and detailed review. For example, a Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report that adequately covers the program under review may be an additional source document for the 5/7 year review. Although interim reports should make use of standardized approaches to the extent possible, like the 5/7 year reviews, specific content is a local determination. Where possible, it is recommended that interested stakeholders, particularly program participants, be given the opportunity (formally or informally) to provide feedback on interim reports.

D. External Input. Program participants and other entities have a vested interest in program performance and the outcomes arising from program reviews. Therefore, each Council should establish a mechanism for public input that could include sharing drafts of the 5/7 year program review document with Council advisory groups (e.g., Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSCs), Advisory Panels (AP), etc.).

E. Finalizing Reviews. The 5/7 year review will be considered a Council document. The Regional Administrator (or designee) will participate in the review process as a partner in the Council process, and serve as the primary point of contact. Once the review is completed, the results would be submitted to the Council for approval and NMFS for concurrence¹⁶ that the review meets the requirements of the MSA.

V. General Approach, Scope of Review, and Use of Standardized Approaches

A. General Approach. The initial review will compare and analyze the fishery before and after the program's implementation, to the extent necessary data prior to the program's implementation is available. As part of the initial development of a CSP, the Council and Secretary will have conducted an analysis of the program's expected effects (i.e., an ex-ante analysis) in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/Amendment document that created the program. Like reviews of regulatory actions conducted under EO 13563¹⁷ and section 610 of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA),¹⁸ a 5/7 year review

¹⁵ See Section I of this Guidance for examples of such reports in certain programs.

¹⁶ Such concurrence will likely be given at the time of Council approval as any substantive issues regarding whether the review itself meets the requirements of the MSA should have been resolved in the development of the review plan.

¹⁷ http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/laws_policies/economic_social/eo13563.pdf

of a CSP is a retrospective evaluation of an established program. Thus, rather than analyzing the program's expected effects, the task in a 5/7 year review is to describe and analyze the effects that have actually taken place since the "baseline" time period prior to the CSP's implementation, or since the program's implementation (i.e., an ex-post analysis). Therefore, Councils need to consider an appropriate baseline for comparison. A baseline period of at least 3 years is preferable, but this can be modified depending on circumstances surrounding the creation and implementation of each program.

Additional data collection programs have been implemented in conjunction with most, if not all, CSPs, so the initial 5 year review may be somewhat limited by a lack of data for the time prior to when the CSP was established. However, subsequent reviews should not be similarly hindered as, ideally, all necessary data collection programs will be in place prior to those reviews. Even if pre-program data are somewhat limited, the review should describe and analyze the changes that have taken place since the program's implementation, with a general focus on performance trends over that time rather than performance in a specific year.

The review should contain the following: 1) purpose and need of the review (discuss legal/policy requirements), 2) goals and objectives of the program, the FMP, and the MSA, 3) history of management, including a description of management prior to the program's implementation, a description of the program at the time of implementation (including enforcement, data collection, and monitoring), and any changes made since the program's implementation or the previous review (including an explanation of why those changes were made), 4) a description of biological, ecological/environmental, economic, social, and administrative environments before and since the program's implementation, 5) an analysis of the program's biological, ecological/environmental, economic, social, and administrative effects, 6) an evaluation of those effects with respect to meeting the goals and objectives (i.e., program performance), including a summary of the conclusions arising from the evaluation, 7) a summary of any unexpected effects (positive or negative) which do not fall under the program's goals and objectives, and 8) recommendations regarding potential changes to the program's structure, including the potential need for additional data collection and/or research.

The review should contain an assessment of the program's effects on net benefits to the Nation, keeping in mind that net benefits are not exclusively economic in nature. This assessment should be consistent with the Economic Guidelines for conducting cost-benefit analyses, except the baseline considered for analyses should be an appropriate number of years prior to the implementation of the CS program and not what would have been likely to occur in the absence of the CS program.¹⁹ In particular, the identification of economic costs and benefits in the review should be consistent with this guidance. For example, increases in employment and tax revenues are not economic benefits within a cost-benefit analysis. The latter is a transfer and the former is an example of an economic impact. Changes in

¹⁸ http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/laws_policies/economic_social/rfa_revised_through_2010_jobs_act.pdf

¹⁹ <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/op/pds/documents/01/111/01-111-05.pdf>

economic impacts at the regional, state, and/or community level are also an important consideration and should be assessed as they are often of key interest to Council members and other stakeholders.

Reviews should not be restricted to a particular length. The review should contain sufficient background information to provide the reader with the necessary context for understanding the analyses contained in the review. However, for the sake of brevity, if particular information has not changed since the program was implemented or last reviewed (e.g., biology of the species), that information can be incorporated by referencing the appropriate document. In addition, if a detailed analysis of a particular component of a program or certain aspect of that component has been conducted elsewhere, the detailed analysis can be incorporated by reference. However, a summary of the findings and their implications with respect to evaluating the program's performance should be included in the review

B. Scope of Review. In general, the review should use as holistic an approach as possible given available data and resources. Interdependencies between related fisheries can generate spillover effects that may be unexpected or unintended. When this occurs and it is difficult to separate impacts from the CSP under review from impacts of other management measures, programs should be considered together. For example, the operations of vessels and associated businesses are frequently not limited to the boundaries of a specific CSP. In the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish fishery, some species are managed within a CSP (e.g., red snapper and grouper-tilefish) while others are not (e.g., vermilion snapper, greater amberjack, grey triggerfish, etc.). Species from within and outside the CSP can be harvested on the same trip. In this case, it would be best to analyze the effects of the catch share program by analyzing the harvest of all species since the costs associated with harvesting these species cannot be separated. When evaluating a program's effects on those businesses, analyses should take into account the entirety of those operations, not just those which take place within the program's bounds. Councils should determine if analyzing the CSP alone will likely mischaracterize the program's performance, and the effects on human communities, fish stocks, and the ecosystem. In instances where two or more CSPs are found to have significant interdependencies, joint program reviews would lead to a more holistic approach and thus more accurate analysis, as well as reduce administrative costs associated with the conduct of these reviews. However, if the CSPs were established in different years, a joint initial review may not be feasible, particularly if they were established more than 5 years apart. Thus, joint reviews are more likely for subsequent rather than initial reviews.

In addition, in cases with significant interdependencies or spillover effects between programs, the review could also consider whether the current scope of the program is still preferable to other alternatives. For example, interdependencies between programs may interfere with and possibly preclude achieving the goals and objectives of each program. These issues would be particularly acute in situations where there is significant overlap in the vessels and businesses that participate in multiple programs. Examples of potential changes that could be considered include adding or removing species or gear types from a program, merging separate CSPs, or reallocating species or gears across CSPs.

C. Use of Standardized Approaches. When describing current conditions, changes since the baseline period, analyzing the effects of the program, and evaluating program performance, the review should make use of standardized performance indicators or metrics developed at the national level, to the

extent possible. Reviews could also make use of additional indicators that may have been developed at the regional level and properly vetted by an appropriate scientific body (e.g., Science Center, Scientific and Statistical Committee, etc.).²⁰

For example, with respect to biological conditions and effects, the reviews should make use of information contained in the most recent stock assessments. Additional information on other key biological indicators will also likely be necessary, depending on the program's goals and objectives (e.g., changes in bycatch, discard mortality, etc.). This information can be obtained from stock assessment reports, observer program reports, SAFE reports, and other sources.

When describing economic and social conditions and analyzing economic and social effects, reviews should make use of the NMFS Office of Science and Technology's (S/T) economic and social performance indicators to the extent possible.²¹ Brinson and Thunberg (2013) demonstrate how many of the economic indicators can be used to evaluate CSP performance.²² As they were attempting to compare performance across multiple CSPs, their analysis was limited to using indicators for which estimates were available across those CSPs. Walden, et al. (2014) subsequently demonstrated how to measure multi-factor productivity changes in CSPs.²³ Further, although Holland et al. (2014) indicates that sufficient data on the prices of Quota Shares (QS) and Quota Pounds (QP) are not available for every program,²⁴ a 5/7 year review should contain an analysis of trends in these indicators when sufficient data are available.²⁵ The QS price reflects expected economic profits in the long-term while the QP price reflects expected economic profits in the short-term. Both are critical to assessing the program's economic effects on participants, particularly if current data are insufficient to directly estimate net revenue or economic profits. Trends in these prices could be related to multiple components of the CSP and numerous other factors external to the program.

Although some of S/T's indicators are not purely economic or social in nature (e.g., catch and landings, effort, cost recovery, etc.), they should still be used where appropriate. Also, the suite of economic and social performance indicators for CSPs is still under development and so the review team should check for updates during the review process.²⁶ If quantitative estimates of particular indicators are not available, a qualitative assessment is acceptable.

S/T's social indicators for CSPs are not as developed across all regions as the economic indicators. As an alternative or in addition to using the social indicators for CSPs, when analyzing effects on communities per National Standard 8, analysts should adapt the social indicators developed by Jepson and Colburn (2013) to assess community vulnerability, resilience, and dependency on the CSP to the extent

²⁰ <http://nefsc.noaa.gov/read/socialsci/pdf/publications/IIFET2010-PMC-PPDS-AK-revised%20gfish%20list.pdf>

²¹ <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/economics/fisheries/commercial/catch-share-program/indicators-definition/>

²² <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/economics/fisheries/commercial/catch-share-program/index>

²³ <http://spo.nmfs.noaa.gov/tm/TM146.pdf>

²⁴ <http://spo.nmfs.noaa.gov/tm/TM145.pdf>

²⁵ QS refers to the long-term catch privileges generally denominated as shares of the total allowable catch (TAC) for a species, area, and/or fishery sector and QP refers to the annual form of quota in a CSP.

²⁶ See <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/economics/fisheries/commercial/catch-share-program/indicators-definition/>

possible.²⁷ In addition, the description of social conditions and analysis of social effects should cover safety at sea,^{28,29} consistent with National Standard 10. It is recommended the review team consult with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's (NIOSH) Alaska Pacific Office on issues related to safety related data and analyses.³⁰ NIOSH provided data that contributed to the analysis of safety at sea in the Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper 5-year review and conducted the analyses for the 5-year reviews of the Amendment 80 and Crab Rationalization CSPs in the North Pacific.

Finally, reviews should analyze changes in concentration using the Herfindahl–Hirschman Index (HHI), as prescribed by the joint guidance from the Department of Justice and Federal Trade Commission,³¹ and distributional changes (e.g., revenue, landings, QS, QP, etc.) using the Gini coefficient, consistent with S/T's performance indicators. The analysis of distributional effects should also examine whether small entities have been disproportionately affected relative to large entities, consistent with the RFA and the CS Policy.

VI. Describing and Analyzing Program Performance

As outlined in the MSA, the purpose of the review is to evaluate whether the CS program is meeting its goals and objectives and the goals of the MSA. Based on the outcome of the review, the goals and objectives of the CS program may need to be revised through a subsequent action. In order to properly describe and analyze a CSP's performance relevant to the goals of the program and the MSA, the 5/7 year review must address the components identified in the CS program's goals and objectives and the following key design components included in MSA 303A: A) goals and objectives, B) allocations, C) eligibility, D) transferability, E) Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) and Accountability Measures (AMs), F) accumulation limits/caps, G) cost recovery, H) data collection/reporting, monitoring, and enforcement, I) duration, J) new entrants, and K) auctions and royalties. If a component is determined not applicable for review, the Council should document in its final plan for the review its rationale for not conducting a more formalized analysis of the component. Such documentation is necessary to produce a strong record demonstrating that the component has been at least initially considered. Further, if a particular component of a program is the subject of a current management action, that component does not need to be addressed in a detailed manner within the review. A summary containing a description of, rationale for, and current status of the management action is sufficient.

²⁷ <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/humandimensions/social-indicators/index>

²⁸ Changes in safety at sea can also be covered in the description of economic conditions and analysis of economic effects.

²⁹ Guidance on Fishing Vessel Risk Assessments and Accounting for Safety at Sea in Fishery Management Design. U.S. Dept. of Commer., NOAA. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-OSF-2, 57 p., available at: fisheries.noaa.gov/sfa/publications/technical-memos/nmfs_osf_tm2.pdf

³⁰ Requests for data and analytical assistance should be sent to Jennifer Lincoln, PhD, APO Director, at jlincoln@cdc.gov

³¹ <http://www.justice.gov/atr/public/guidelines/hmg-2010.html>

A. Goals and Objectives. According to Section 303A(c)(1)(G) of the MSA, a primary goal of the review is to determine whether and to what degree the goals of the program and the Act have been met due to implementation of the program. The CS Policy indicates it is necessary to examine objectives as well, including those of the FMP (see p. iii and p. 7). Thus, the goals and objectives in this case include those identified in the implementing Amendment, the FMP, the CS Policy, and the MSA, particularly those specific to LAPPs, though the primary focus should be on those identified in the implementing Amendment.

In addition, the goals and objectives of the Amendment and FMP should be evaluated with respect to whether they are clear, measurable (at least qualitatively³²), achievable (i.e., are two or more objectives mutually exclusive?), and still appropriate under the current circumstances. Fishery performance changes over time, and for other reasons than the effects of the program or other management measures. Such changes should be taken into account when evaluating the efficacy of the original goals and objectives. If certain goals and objectives are found not to be clear, measurable, achievable, and/or still appropriate, the review should note any deficiencies, recommend specific revisions, deletions, or additions and provide a rationale for each recommendation.

When a goal or objective is found to be unclear, the review team should seek clarification from Council members or members of NMFS leadership directly involved with the program's development. If this approach proves unsuccessful, the review team should make its best attempt to interpret the Council's or NMFS' intent in each case rather than not address it. A common example of an unclear goal or objective is when an objective is stated in the form of an action that was taken in the Amendment (e.g., allocate a portion of the total available scallop harvest to the general category scallop fishery). The action is not the objective but rather the tool used to achieve that objective. The team should make its best effort to discern what that action was meant to achieve using the identified approaches.

Another complication review teams are likely to encounter is the lack of specific performance standards to evaluate whether, or to what extent, the goals and objectives have been met. For example, a Council may have indicated that a goal of the program is to reduce overcapacity. Such a goal tells the review team the direction of the desired change in overcapacity, but not the magnitude of the desired change. If the Council actually meant to indicate that their goal was to eliminate overcapacity, then the goal needs to be clarified. If it has a particular target level of reduction in mind, or alternatively a particular level of harvesting capacity, then that level should be stated explicitly in the FMP. Thus, one specific purpose of the reviews is to encourage Councils and NMFS to clearly identify specific performance standards that can be used in assessing whether, or to what extent, the goals and objectives have been met.

³² For example, qualitative objectives that provide a direction of the desired change may be used when quantitative objectives that provide explicit details on the magnitude of the change are not possible.

If the program is performing as expected at the time of implementation, then the various goals and objectives either should have been achieved or substantial progress should have been made towards achieving them. If the analysis concludes otherwise, such conclusions may serve as the basis for recommending changes to the program. If the review determines there are numerous and serious problems with the existing program that likely cannot be solved by modifying the existing program, it is recommended that the Council evaluate whether the CSP's current form is still preferable to other alternatives, and consider if the program should be continued or eliminated.

B. Allocations. Section 303A(c)(5) of the MSA requires initial allocations to be fair and equitable under all LAPPs. Further, according to the CS Policy, CSP reviews should examine existing allocations and evaluate whether the existing allocations are those that maximize net benefits to the Nation, including potential economic, environmental, public health and safety, and other advantages, distributive impacts, and equity, consistent with National Standard 1 and EO 12866. Specifically, the CS Policy states: "For all fishery management programs, including catch shares, the underlying harvest allocations to specific fishery sectors (e.g., commercial and recreational) should be revisited on a regular basis, and the basis for the allocation should include consideration of conservation, economic, and social criteria used in specifying optimum yield and in furtherance of the goals of the underlying FMP." The CS Policy also states, "in existing catch share programs, this evaluation of allocations should be part of the MSA-mandated 5-year review." Further, "if the underlying allocation between sectors for a given fishery has not been reviewed by the Council since a LAP was initially approved, the Council should include such an assessment as part of its 5-year review unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. The mandatory 5-year review for each LAP is an appropriate time for a review and assessment of a given fishery's allocations since the fishery should have benefited significantly during its extended period of management under the LAP."³³ (emphasis added)

Thus, the allocations to be reviewed according to the CS Policy include the allocations between entities within the program, the allocations between sectors (e.g., gear types) within the program, and the allocations between the commercial and recreational sectors in instances where both sectors harvest the species covered by the CSP. In the analysis and evaluation of allocations between entities, existing caps/limits on QS and QP should be explicitly taken into account. Thus, any recommendations to change those allocations should consider the potential for entities to exceed the existing caps/limits on QS and QP under an alternative allocation and, in turn, the possibility they would be forced to divest under a different allocation or the existing caps/limits need to be reconsidered.

In 2016, NMFS finalized the Fisheries Allocation Review Policy (ADD LINK). This policy outlines a decision by the Council Coordination Committee for each Council to identify appropriate triggers for all FMPs with explicit allocations. If the 5/7 year review is identified as a trigger for a catch share program, then the allocations for that program should be reviewed during the 5/7 year reviews. However, if an alternative trigger has been chosen for a catch share program (public input, performance based or some other time based), the Council should note this, and discuss their method for determining if the

³³ A LAP is a limited access privilege.

identified trigger has been met. If the identified trigger has not been met, a full analysis of allocation is not necessary.

Because an evaluation of allocations between sectors as well as entities in the program may require considerable time and resources, and is expected to be analytically complex, it may be appropriate to conduct the detailed analysis separately from the other components of the review. As stated in Section V, part A, of this guidance, the detailed analysis can be incorporated by reference and the review need only contain a summary of the analytical findings and a discussion of their implications with respect to evaluating the program's performance. In addition, if the underlying allocation between sectors is the subject of a current management action, that would be a compelling reason not to address it in the 5/7 year review. As stated in Section V, part A, of this guidance, a summary containing a description of, rationale for, and current status of the management action is sufficient for this review. Other compelling reasons may exist for not addressing the underlying allocation between sectors, but would need to be determined on a case by case basis.

C. Eligibility. Section 303A(c)(1)(D) of the MSA indicates that eligibility requirements must be established for LAPPs. Reviews should evaluate eligibility requirements regarding who is allowed to hold QS or QP (e.g., U.S. citizenship, owner on board provisions, etc.). The review may determine that certain restrictions on eligibility are inhibiting or precluding the achievement of certain objectives and thus may recommend these restrictions be relaxed or eliminated. The review may also indicate that additional restrictions are necessary to achieve particular objectives.

When analyzing the program's economic and social effects, if resources are available, it could be useful to also assess the effects on "historical" participants who were previously but are no longer involved in the fishery or program (i.e., prior to the program's implementation or the last review). If resources allow, a survey to assess current and historical participants' satisfaction with the program and changes in their well-being would be useful in understanding why the historical participants no longer participate and could clarify the program's social and economic effects, and its performance.

D. Transferability. Section 303A(c)(7) of the MSA requires a policy and criteria for the transferability of privileges be established in LAPPs. All existing CSPs in the United States allow for at least some transferability of QS or QP. Transferability is generally thought to improve technical efficiency and thus aid in achieving economic efficiency in a fishery, consistent with National Standard 5. Therefore, restrictions on transferability are thought to result in technical and economic inefficiency. However, economic efficiency is not a CSP's only objective. Restrictions on transferability may serve to meet other objectives, such as equity, per National Standard 4, providing for the sustained participation of and minimizing adverse economic effects on fishing communities, per National Standard 8, or reducing adverse effects on particular types of habitat (e.g., Essential Fish Habitat). The review should determine whether existing transferability provisions are conducive to achieving the specified objectives, keeping in mind that trade-offs often exist between objectives.

E. ACL/AM/Quota performance. Except for stocks with annual life cycles and those managed under international agreements, all stocks potentially managed by CSPs should have ACLs and AMs, per section

303(a)(15) of the MSA. Because CSPs typically serve as an AM for these stocks, reviews should discuss whether the program has helped to keep harvests/landings within the applicable limit(s). If overages have occurred, the frequency and magnitude of such overages should be discussed along with an analysis of why they occurred. The review should also describe and analyze changes in the status of all stocks within the CSP. Specific attention should also be paid to the performance standards for ACLs and AMs contained in the NS1 guidelines (see CFR 600.310(g)(4)). In addition, the review should assess changes in bycatch and discard mortality to determine whether the program is minimizing bycatch to the extent practicable, consistent with National Standard 9. The review should also analyze whether the program is encouraging full utilization of the available ACL, TAC, or quota. If full utilization is not taking place, the review should assess why this is the case. Full utilization of the ACL, TAC, or quota should not be confused with achieving OY, which involves the consideration of many other factors, or utilization of available harvesting capacity, since harvesting capacity is not determined by the available ACL, TAC, or quota.

F. Accumulation limits/caps. Section 303A(c)(5)(D) of the MSA requires Councils and NMFS to establish appropriate limits or caps to prevent the excessive accumulation of harvesting privileges. The accumulation of excessive shares is thought to potentially create market power in the product market, input markets (e.g., gear, bait, labor, etc.), and/or the markets for QS and QP. Market power creates economic inefficiency, contrary to National Standard 5. Even if market power is not created, excessive shares are also to be avoided for equity/distributional reasons, consistent with National Standard 4, National Standard 8, and section 303A(c)(5)(D)(ii) of the MSA. Reviews should analyze and evaluate the equity/distributional impacts of existing caps and the impacts those caps have had on the creation of market power by affected entities.

In addition, Holliday and Anderson (2007) indicate that a primary concern with accumulation limits and caps is their ability to prevent firms from being technically efficient (i.e., firms could produce more output with their current inputs, or they could use less inputs to produce their current output). Technical inefficiency would in turn prevent firms from fully utilizing existing economies of scale and producing at the minimum average cost per unit of harvest (i.e., firms are also productively inefficient). Because caps on QS do not necessarily limit a firm's production in a given year, and QS owners can purchase additional QP, this concern primarily applies to caps or limits on QP. Reviews should analyze whether and to what extent QP caps or limits have generated technical inefficiency for firms operating in a CSP.

As with allocations, an analysis of market power is expected to be analytically complex and therefore may require considerable time and resources. Thus, it may be appropriate to conduct the detailed analysis separately from the other components of the review. In that case, the review need only contain a summary of the analytical findings and a discussion of their implications with respect to evaluating the program's performance. An analysis of market power in the Mid-Atlantic Surf Clam/Ocean Quahog Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) program has already been conducted³⁴ and was the subject of a

³⁴ http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/read/socialsci/pdf/SCOQ_ITQ_Exc_Share_Rec_2011-05-03.pdf

review by the Center for Independent Experts (CIE).³⁵ An analysis using the same approach has also been conducted for the Northeast Multispecies Sectors program,³⁶ which was also reviewed by the CIE.³⁷ However, the conclusions of the two CIE reviews differ with respect to the appropriateness of the approach and data used to reach the conclusions and recommendations in the respective analyses. Analysts are advised to take into account the concerns and deficiencies noted in the CIE review of the analysis for the Sectors program when conducting market power analyses.

Further, the review should explicitly address whether existing data collection and monitoring programs are sufficient to accurately determine each entity's ownership level and thus whether entities are exceeding the existing caps. The review should also address whether the caps are being applied at the appropriate levels to ensure they are serving their intended purpose. Because caps typically apply to all "persons" or "entities," the review team should determine whether "persons" and "entities" are being identified in the program in a manner consistent with the Council's intent and other agency practices and guidance (e.g., accounting for affiliation, consistent with the Small Business Administration's regulations, where practicable). For example, if the caps are being applied in a manner that precludes the estimation of an appropriate HHI or Gini coefficient, that should be noted and addressed in the review.

One of the anticipated effects of limits and caps is to limit the degree of consolidation within the fleet. Consolidation would typically be expected to result in a reduction in capacity and overcapacity, which is a goal of most CSPs. Analyses of changes in capacity and overcapacity should be conducted in a manner consistent with the terminology and methods outlined in NMFS' National Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity.³⁸

G. Cost Recovery. The review should discuss whether a cost recovery program is in place, per Section 303A(e) of the MSA, the cost recovery fee percentage, any changes to the fee, and the amount of fees collected on an annual basis. According to the CS Policy, "Incremental government costs for management, data collection and analysis, and enforcement of limited access privilege programs shall be recovered from participants as required by the MSA." The review should determine whether the program is assessing fees in a manner such that all incremental costs are included in the assessment, whether the collected fees cover all incremental costs (i.e., does the 3% cap imposed by MSA preclude collecting fees to cover all incremental costs?), and evaluate the current economic effect of these fees on program participants (e.g., what is the reduction in gross revenue, net revenue, or profits on average per participants?). Any compliance or enforcement issues related to cost recovery should also be discussed. If the program does not include cost recovery, the review should include an explanation of that decision along with a discussion of plans to develop such a program in the future, where applicable.

³⁵ http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/read/socialsci/pdf/CIE_report_final.pdf

³⁶ http://www.nefmc.org/nemulti/planamen/Amend%2018/compass_lexecon/NEMFC%20Report%20Final.pdf

³⁷ http://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/6a_CL-peer-review-reports.pdf

³⁸ <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/op/pds/documents/01/113/01-113-01.pdf>

H. Data Collection/Reporting, Monitoring, and Enforcement. According to Section 303A(c)(1)(H) of the MSA, each LAPP must include “an effective system for enforcement, monitoring, and management of the program, including the use of observers or electronic monitoring systems.” Thus, the review should contain a description and assessment of the existing data collection, monitoring, and enforcement programs (e.g., observers, logbooks, economic data reporting, etc.), including a discussion of any changes since the CSP’s implementation or the previous review. Specific attention should be paid to assessing whether the existing programs are sufficient to accurately and thoroughly assess the program’s performance relative to the various goals and objectives.

Important data gaps or deficiencies, including gaps in the ability to validate collected data, should be identified and recommendations provided for how to fill those gaps or correct any deficiencies. Cost estimates for filling any gaps or deficiencies could also be provided so that a net benefit assessment can be conducted, as certain data improvements may be cost prohibitive given current resources and other factors. In addition, particular attention should be paid to assessing whether the reporting burden on CSP participants is being minimized to the extent practicable, consistent with PRA. A customer satisfaction survey may be useful in discerning participants’ views on this issue. It may also be useful to evaluate whether current CSP data collection programs are redundant with other existing programs and provide recommendations for eliminating overlapping requirements. In general, potential means to reduce reporting burden should be identified and recommendations provided as to which are currently practicable.

Specific attention should be given to describing and assessing the use of electronic technologies versus paper-based and other more labor intensive methods, particularly with respect to their effect on the accuracy of the collected data and resulting statistical estimates but also with respect to their effect on the ability to engage in real time reporting. In general, electronic reporting is more conducive to achieving real time reporting. Another purpose of this assessment is to determine whether the administrative costs associated with data collection and monitoring are being minimized to the extent practicable, as these costs are either borne by industry via cost recovery fees or the public via tax collections. Practicable in this case means without reducing the accuracy of the data and resulting statistical estimates to scientifically unacceptable levels. Potential cost saving changes should be identified and discussed.

With respect to enforcement, particular attention should be paid to assessing whether the current enforcement provisions and activities, including resources for conducting the latter, are sufficient to ensure a high rate of compliance with program requirements. Wide non-compliance can adversely affect the ability of other CSP attributes to achieve their desired goals and objectives. What is considered a sufficiently “high” rate of compliance is another example of a performance standard that should be specified.

Although cost recovery, data collection/reporting, monitoring, and enforcement should be addressed separately, a description and overall assessment of the CSP’s administrative costs should be provided to determine whether total administrative costs are being minimized to the extent practicable, consistent with National Standard 7. It is quite likely there will be trade-offs in the various types of administrative

costs. If the review indicates various types of improvements may be necessary to achieve the CSP's goals and objectives, the Council and NMFS will want to know the potential change in total administrative costs associated with such in addition to specific increases.

I. Duration. The review should indicate the lifespan of catch privileges within the CSP. QS are not issued in perpetuity. According to Section 303A(f) of the MSA, their lifespan is limited to 10 years if the program was established after January 12, 2007, though they will be renewed if not revoked, limited, or modified.³⁹ The review should assess whether the current duration of catch privileges is still appropriate, given the CSP's goals and objectives and other factors (e.g., lending practices of financial institutions). Economic theory indicates that, the longer a catch privilege's duration, the greater will be its economic value as an asset. Higher prices for QS will benefit current holders but also increase entry costs for new entrants. Recommendations to change the duration should keep this in mind.

J. New Entrants. The issue of new entrants is one that cuts across multiple program design features, including but not necessarily limited to allocations (e.g., is there a set-aside?), transferability (e.g., do the transferability rules make it more or less difficult for new entities to participate in the program?), duration (are QS prices increasing over time as a result of the QS' duration?), and auctions (e.g., are auctions being used to provide another means for new entities to participate in the program?). An additional consideration is whether loan programs have been established to help new entities participate in the program, consistent with Section 303A(g) and 303A(c)(5)(g) of the MSA. Programs to assist new entrants are supposed to be considered when CSPs are initially developed. From an economic perspective, an assessment of the costs of entry should be provided, along with a determination of whether entry costs have increased to the point where market power is being exercised and economic inefficiencies are being created. A discussion of equity/distributional considerations should also be provided, including an assessment of any inter-generational effects.

K. Auctions and Royalties. For CSPs implemented after January 12, 2007, section 303A(d) of the MSA requires Councils and NMFS to consider the use of auctions or royalties for the initial or any subsequent distribution of limited access privileges. Royalties and auctions are means to collect resource rents and return some of the economic value of the resource to the general public. Resource rent is the difference between the price at which fish can be sold and the respective production costs which include a normal return to the privilege holder. Thus, royalties and cost recovery fees are not synonymous.

³⁹ For example, see the rules to revoke inactive QS in the wreckfish ITQ program (<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/09/26/2012-23731/fisheries-of-the-caribbean-gulf-of-mexico-and-south-atlantic-snapper-grouper-fishery-off-the>) and the Pacific halibut/sablefish IFQ program (<https://www.federalregister.gov/regulations/0648-AX91/revoke-inactive-quota-share-and-annual-individual-fishing-quota-from-a-holder-of-quota-share-under-t>)