

NATIONAL SSC WORKSHOP
SOCIAL SCIENCES BREAKOUT SESSION 3: PROCEDURAL/DATA ISSUES

The first trigger question provided below is intended as a starting point for discussion; associated sub-questions are provided in the subsequent paragraph. The remaining trigger questions pertain to the types of recommendations that will be elicited during this breakout session. Example recommendations are provided and are subject to further editing and expansion to reflect the findings of this session. Appendix A briefly discusses how social science is incorporated into the Pacific Fishery Management Council process; the example is intended to suggest ways of considering how social science is used by other Councils.

Trigger Questions

- What is the role of social scientists and social science in the context of SSC structure and process?
- What practices exist or could be developed to improve social science inputs to the Council?
- How can the SSC develop and improve social science data and methods that are useful to the Council?
- What can be done more generally to develop and improve social science data and methods that are useful to the Council?
- What are best practices for data collection and research that address Council social science needs?

Starting point for discussion: What is the role of social scientists and social science in the context of SSC structure and process?

Is there a requirement to include social scientists on the SSC?

How well are social scientists and social science review integrated into the SSC process?

What types of social science topics appear on the SSC agenda?

Who conducts social science analysis for the Council?

How rigorously is social science analysis reviewed by the SSC?

How is the outcome of social science review conveyed to the Council?

Is there any follow-up to ensure that SSC recommendations are implemented?

Draft recommendations: What practices exist or could be developed to improve social science inputs to the Council?

Consistent with the prerogatives established by each Council, the SSC should consider highlighting social science issues that are important to the Council through products such as white papers.

For Councils that have a Research and Data Needs document, a social sciences section should be included in the document and updated as needed.

For Councils that consider methodology reviews as part of their future meeting planning, social science models should be considered as candidates for such review.

Training for new Council members should include a social science component

For Councils that receive status reports on NMFS Science Centers activities that are relevant to Council responsibilities, these status reports should include relevant social science research and data collection.

SAFE reports for FMP fisheries should include a social science component.

Councils should provide opportunities for information presentations that highlight important socioeconomic issues, evaluate socioeconomic trends in fisheries, and discuss outcomes of social science workshops.

Draft recommendations: How can the SSC develop and improve social science data and methods that are useful to the Council?

If the Council maintains a Research and Data Needs document, the SSC should ensure that social science needs are included in the document.

SSC review of social science analyses should be no less rigorous than reviews of other types of analyses. To enhance effectiveness of review, documentation of the products being reviewed should be provided to the SSC well in advance of the review. Documentation should be adequate to allow replication of results.

For economic analyses, potential topics for review include appropriateness/representativeness of data, model specification, estimation methods, plausibility of underlying assumptions, model validation (statistical tests, predictive ability), interpretation of results, consideration of uncertainty.

As appropriate, the SSC should be able to revisit a model or analysis previously reviewed to determine whether their recommendations were actually implemented.

Draft recommendations: What can be done more generally to develop and improve social science data and methods that are useful to the Council?

Just because a method is widely accepted in a particular discipline does not necessarily mean that it addresses Council needs. Methods must be operationally useful to the Council.

Interdisciplinary collaboration is often helpful for methodology development. Collaboration between social and natural scientists is particularly useful for methodologies that involve linkages among biological, social and economic variables.

Improved methodologies are needed to evaluate community effects. Collaboration among economists, anthropologists and other social scientists are needed for this effort. Particular subdisciplines that may contribute to such collaboration (e.g., economic geography) should be identified.

Workshops can be a good forum for stimulation of ideas, provided that they are focused on Council needs and provide practical outcomes for the Council.

Draft recommendations: What are best practices for data collection and research that address Council social science needs?

For Councils that have a Research and Data Needs document, that document should be used as vehicle for publicizing the Council's social science priorities outside the Council family.

Funding entities (e.g., Sea Grant) should be encouraged to utilize Council's social science priorities as a ratings criterion.

Social science expertise provided by Council staff, FMP teams, and NMFS Science Centers and Regional Offices helps to ensure soundness of the analyses reviewed by the SSC.

Involvement of agency and academic social scientists on Council advisory committees encourages research that is policy relevant and provides natural opportunities for agency-academic collaboration. NMFS Science Center social scientists have access to dedicated socioeconomic funding from NMFS' Office of Science and Technology.

Academic involvement on Council advisory committees may provide external benefits by increasing graduate student interest in fishery issues.

Councils are typically dependent on outside entities (e.g., states, NMFS, interstate commissions) for the commercial and recreational fishery data used for management. Participation of social scientists on the interagency committees that manage these data provides a venue for ensuring that fishery data are useful for meeting the Council's social science needs.

APPENDIX A. How Social Science Fits into the Pacific Fishery Management Council Process

The Pacific Fishery Management Council's SSC consists of 17 members from state and federal agencies, universities and other sources. The SSC's major role is to review scientific information (data, models, analyses) being used to inform PFMC deliberations and determine whether such information constitutes 'best available science'. The SSC contributes to the PFMC's Research and Data Needs document, which is updated periodically; the document includes an "Economics and Social Science" section. As part of the PFMC's future meeting planning process, the SSC provides the Council with lists of groundfish and salmon methodologies that warrant and are ready for review. This year, for the first time, economic models were included on the list.

The SSC includes six subcommittees: Economics, Ecosystem-Based Management, Salmon, Groundfish, Coastal Pelagic Species, and Highly Migratory Species. The entire SSC membership meets five times a year on dates that overlap with the Council meetings. Topics expected to require an extensive amount of review time are assigned to the appropriate Subcommittee, which meets separately from the full SSC. Subcommittee reviews typically include Terms of Reference that define roles and expectations for all participants in the review. The Subcommittee drafts a report of its findings and recommendations and presents that report at the next meeting of the SSC; the Subcommittee report and SSC comments regarding the report are then presented to the Council.

The PFMC's Operating Procedures require that the SSC include at least two social scientists. The SSC currently includes two economists. The Economics Subcommittee includes these two economists as well as three biologists. This interdisciplinary composition can be helpful, given the often 'bioeconomic' nature of the methods being reviewed.

Examples of socioeconomic topics addressed by the SSC and/or the Economics Subcommittee include the following:

- SSC economists were involved in the preparation of two white papers for the Council: "Marine Reserves: Objectives, Rationales, Fishery Management Implications and Regulatory Requirements" and "Report on Overcapitalization in the West Coast Groundfish Fishery".
- Topics covered by the Economics Subcommittee have included the PFMC's groundfish trawl rationalization program and a groundfish harvest and revenue projection model.
- NMFS/NWFSC developed a customized regional economic impact model (IO-PAC) for PFMC use. The initial version of the model was reviewed by the Center for Independent Experts, then reviewed by the SSC before being used by the Council.

PFMC staff includes one economist and one social scientist. Three of the PFMC's four FMP Management Teams include an economist. Three of the PFMC's four SAFE documents include an economic component. Much of the economic data and models used by the PFMC (e.g., angler expenditure and commercial cost/earnings data, IO-PAC) are provided by NMFS Science Center economists with funding support from NMFS' Office of Science and Technology. Most of the harvest data used by the PFMC are collected by the states and NMFS under the auspices of the PacFIN and RecFIN programs; members of the interagency PacFIN and REcFIN Committees include NMFS economists.

A major socioeconomic need identified by the SSC pertains to development of community models that are not just descriptive but also predictive of effects of regulatory alternatives on fishing communities. The PFMC agenda tends to be dominated by other deadline-driven needs (e.g., stock assessments,

ACLs). Also, because social and economic effects are often the last component of an EIS to be completed, this tends to constrain the amount of review devoted to such effects.