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New England Fishery Management Council Holistic Strategic Plan

DRAFT Implementation Charter

Adopted: September XX, 2026

Supporting Implementation of the NEFMC 2026–2036 Holistic Strategic Plan

1. Purpose

This Implementation Charter (“Charter”) establishes a structured framework for operationalizing the New England Fishery Management Council’s (NEFMC) 2026–2036 Holistic Strategic Plan (“HSP”). The Charter ensures that the HSP’s guiding principles and strategic goals are integrated into the Council’s annual workflow to improve organizational agility, transparency, and decision-making. The Charter will be utilized as the Council follows a five-phase roadmap: Foundation, Launch, Build, Expand, and Sustain.

The HSP is not a regulatory document; implementation focuses on organizational effectiveness rather than fishery-specific management outcomes.

2. Guiding Principles

Implementation of the Holistic Strategic Plan and Priorities will follow five guiding principles:

1. **Organizational Excellence:** In striving for organizational excellence, actions will reflect available staff, Council, and partner capacity.
2. **Representative:** In supporting the long-term viability of the entire New England fleet, the public will be engaged early and throughout the Council process.
3. **Stewardship:** In operationalizing ecosystem approaches to fisheries management, implementation will proceed incrementally, with early emphasis on achievable actions.
4. **Adaptability:** In pursuing adaptability, approaches will be adjusted based on experience, feedback, and changing conditions.
5. **Trust:** In building trust, progress, constraints, and tradeoffs will be communicated directly to the Council.

3. Roles and Accountability

Establishment of clear roles and responsibilities will ensure that a clear process is followed, and that each strategic initiative has a dedicated owner. Defined roles bridge the gap between strategic vision and day-to-day execution of work priorities and the HSP. Mapping roles clarifies responsibilities, improves coordination, and supports shared accountability for the HSP’s success.

Council:

- Sets strategic direction through approval of annual priorities and major shifts in priorities
- Receives implementation updates for awareness, guidance, and concurrence
- Stewards the Council’s mission and vision

Executive Committee:

- Provides strategic oversight
- Reviews progress relative to key performance indicators and advises on adjustments
- Fosters partnerships with the Northeast Fisheries Science Center and Greater Atlantic Regional Office that support the HSP

Executive Director:

- Serves as Executive Sponsor for implementation
- Confirms priorities, sequencing, and pacing
- Ensures alignment with staff capacity and Council direction
- Liaison for Council's mission and goals with partners (regional and national NOAA, other Councils, and ASMFC)

Fisheries Management Coordinator:

- Tracks progress and identifies risks or constraints, monitors Key Performance Indicators
- Prepares updates for leadership (Executive Director and Executive Committee), the Council, and staff

FMP Leads/Staff:

- Fishery Management Plan (FMP) leads are responsible for working with Committees and Working Groups on executing specific initiatives and delivering milestones within their respective FMPs or working groups
- Maintain a working knowledge of the HSP; support generation of KPIs and execution of initiatives

5. Approach

Implementation will begin with near-term actions that are achievable within existing authority under the Magnuson Stevens Act and resources. The Strategic Plan will be integrated into existing Council processes, including annual priority setting and work planning. Progress will be tracked using a simple, consistent framework, and adjustments to implementation will be made as experience grows and conditions evolve. Implementation and tracking will leverage a "RACI" (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) process to define roles and track ownership for strategic initiatives and key actions by each Council group. Finally, the Strategic Plan is intended to function as a living framework, not a fixed checklist.

6. Accountability and Reporting

Council Staff (e.g., Fisheries Management Coordinator) will provide regular updates to the Executive Committee and Council. Progress will be reviewed periodically, and mid-year adjustments may be made to reflect capacity, experience, and changing conditions, consistent with Council policies.