

| 9-Jan-20 | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| # | Recommendation | Review Panel Priority Level* | Review Panel Suggestions - How to Implement | Council Priority Level | Council Suggestions - How to Implement | Who: lead organization/committee | Timing (short-term, intermediate, long-term) | Relative Cost (\$-\$-\$)** | Date Started | Date Completed |
| Term of Reference 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | The Panel recommends the Council increase its ability to meet NS 8, on the participation of fishery-dependent communities and minimization of economic impacts of its measures, and the requirements of Executive Orders that pertain to minority, low-income, and Native American populations. | High | With the help of the Social Sciences Branch of the Center, the Council economists and others with social science training should prepare a white paper that addresses opportunities for, and barriers to meeting the requirements of NS 8 and EOs 12898 and EO 13175, with regard to the participation of fishery-dependent services, industries and communities, minority and low-income populations, and Native Americans. This white paper can be used by the Council in reviewing and adjusting priorities and may help identify ways to improve Council staff and PDT member access to data and expertise at the Center. | Low | SSB and Council staff already work closely on these issues. Council members being surveyed on social analyses. | NEFSC/NEFMC | | \$\$\$ | | |
| 2 | The Panel recommends continued efforts to ensure adequate recreational representation across its committees and advisory panels and to ensure appropriate attention to recreational fisheries in its FMPs. | High | Council staff should review recreational representation on advisory panels and committees of the Council. Consider an ad-hoc working group with liaisons and staff from the MAFMC and ASMFC to review lessons learned in other fishery management bodies to represent and support saltwater recreational fishing and to ensure improved communication among these bodies concerning recreational fisheries issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries. | Medium | Council adopted recreational positions for Habitat and Herring APs, June 2019. Council to consider dedicated recreational positions on Herring, Habitat Committees and APs June 2019. <i>Discussed with RAP 2/22/2019</i> . Ex Comm discussion 1/16/2019; Council discussion 1/30/2019. Council already includes recreational representation on the RAP and Herring Committees. This issue will be pursued in conjunction with item 24 on RAP membership. | ExComm | | \$-\$ | | |
| 3 | The Panel recommends the Council accelerate its work on EBFM and continue to strategically plan for integrating EBFM into their operations. This planning will need to consider how other issues and policies, such as climate change and the National Climate Science Strategy, affect NEFMC fish stocks and management. Preparation now, while not in crisis mode, will allow for thoughtful consideration and interaction with the Center and Regional offices. | High | Expand and accelerate the activities of the staff and EBFM Committee, including assessing relevant national and regional policies, initiatives, and plans; scientific evidence to assess anticipated changes in NEFMC fish stocks (e.g., latitudinal and longitudinal movements); and implementing the Council's chosen approach for incorporating EBFM into management. | Medium | Council continues to pursue EBFM. It is unclear how effort can be expanded and accelerated without additional resources at the NEFSC. Plan reviewed at January 2019 Council meeting, development continuing. | Council | | \$ | | |
| 4 | The Panel recommends that the Council continue working with the Center and Region to ensure that data are available as needed for adjustments to the sector catch share program, and for catch share and fisheries allocation reviews. | | Council staff economists work with Social Sciences Branch staff at the Center to identify gaps and opportunities for future assessments of the Council's catch share programs and consider how these reviews can inform the development of alternative approaches to fisheries allocations. | Low | After completion of Sector Catch Share Review, Council will evaluate data gaps and discuss with SSB. One shortfall may be business cost information. SSC member surveyed Council members on needs for social science information, reported to Council January 2020; Council staff working with NEFSC on issue. | Council | | \$\$ | | |
| 5 | The Panel recommends that the Council re-evaluate the composition and objectives of the <i>Research Steering Committee (RSC) Policy</i> and guidance in light of changes in kinds and nature of research and the possibility that it can become the Council's central committee for establishing research priorities. | | Council staff to review current guidance for RSC (in the Operations Handbook) and the RSC policy and update if necessary. Clarify purpose, roles, and tasks of the RSC. | Medium | Council decided to disband RSC December 2019. Changes to Operations Handbook approved April 2019 Council meeting. | Council | | \$ | | |

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| 5 | | | Review the research priority setting processes of other Councils, and then collaborate or interact with partner agencies, such as NEFSC. (Note: this is a May 2018 CCC agenda item.) | Medium | Priority process changed to annual. Changes to Operations Handbook approved April 2019 Council meeting. | Council | | \$ | | |
| 6 | The Panel recommends that the Council apply the <i>Risk Policy</i> consistently and in a forward-looking manner as a tool for decision-making. | | The Risk Policy Working Group or a newly constituted working group should identify obstacles and opportunities for improved use of the Risk Policy and Risk Policy Matrix in PDT and Council decision-making. Provide training to Council staff and members, PDT members, and the SSC to improve its use as a tool for decision-making. | Low | Review of Risk Policy implementation not adopted for 2020 priorities. | | | \$\$ | | |
| 7 | The Panel recommends that the Council continue to seek opportunities to better integrate and leverage research needs that cross the Center, Region, and Council. | | The RSC should map out the research planning/prioritization and roles of each agency and subsidiary body to identify and assess any potential redundancies/duplication of effort in order to provide opportunities to increase efficiency and uptake. | Low | RSC disbanded. | NRCC | | \$ | | |
| 8 | The Panel recommends that the Council be fully informed about the limitations of biological, ecological, economic and social data and how uncertainty affects the ability for Council staff and others to answer specific questions. In general, further explanation and training about sources, treatment, and communication of uncertainty would benefit Council members and staff. Sometimes the correct answer to a question is that it's not answerable with the available information and attempts to do so can result in loss of credibility. | High | Offer short (1-2 hour) courses for the Council and longer-term (1-2 day) courses for staff training in quantifying, interpreting, and communicating uncertainty. | Medium | Council received briefing on uncertainty at the January 2019 Council meeting. Will provide periodic updates/refresher, including briefing to newly appointed members. Briefing to be provided to Advisory Panel members. Continuing to seek out staff training opportunities on this topic. | ED | | \$ | | |
| 9 | The Panel recommends that, to the extent allowable under the law and relevant policy guidelines, attempts should be made to simplify the science and other requirements of the management system. | | The Council and NMFS should work together to examine potential mechanisms for reducing the information required and aligning demands on Council staff with the available level of scientific information. A fuller investigation of procedures adopted by other Councils may help in this regard. | Low | Will continue to explore use of Supplemental Information Reports (rather than EA or EIS) for Council actions. SIRs used for several specifaction packages in fall 2019. | ED | | \$\$\$ | | |
| 10 | The Panel notes that even management successes are fragile and that the Council and Council staff should be proactive and develop management responses to sudden drops in stock size, corrections when there is uncertainty in catches (e.g., action associated with the discovery of under-reporting that leads to reductions in allowable catches), changes in bycatch rules in other fisheries, new Endangered Species Act (ESA) issuances, and other events that may cause unforeseen changes in stock status or required management actions. | High | Select a few species with differing characteristics (e.g., life history, stock status and management options) and use available data and models to explore possible stock changes and potential management responses in a future scenarios mode. These results will also provide information on the adequacy of the data by using a formal, quantitative definition of adequacy, rather than relying solely on expert opinion. This may be a useful task for the SSC to undertake. | Low | Benefits of this suggestion seem highly uncertain. This type of scenario planning could prove exceedingly complex and time consuming. MSE approaches, while similar, may be a more appropriate way to attempt to pre-plan responses. | | | \$\$\$ | | |

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| 11 | The Panel recommends that Council staff perform, contract out, or request the SSC or Center staff to undertake selected analyses to determine if they would be beneficial to the scientific input for the Council's decision making. A few examples would be selected to evaluate the sensitivity and robustness of stock assessment results to the adequacy of the input data, particularly misreported or under-reported commercial and recreational catch data, and inaccurate discard information from both of these fisheries components. From these analyses, the adequacy of input data may be able to be formally defined and quantified using statistical and simulation methods applied to evaluate the robustness of stock assessment outputs. Results of such analyses should be clearly communicated to stakeholders. | High | Conduct sensitivity analyses to determine how misreported or under-reported commercial and recreational catch, discard rates and possibly other data anomalies affect stock assessments. The Center reported that it has already undertaken some sensitivity analyses for the anticipated higher recreational catch estimates from the new Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) due to be released this summer, and has found that for the examples investigated, it makes relatively little difference to assessment outputs. Published studies have also shown that using misreported catch information tends to have relatively little effect on assessments of stock status and appropriate management responses unless there is a strong positive or negative time trend in levels of misreporting or discarding, and management actions associated with these. | Low | Recent updates to MRIP data provide empirical examples of how inaccurate data can affect stock assessments. Council issued contract to text these effects on groundfish stocks as part of A23; report expected April/May 2020. | Council/NEFSC | | \$\$\$ | | |
| 12 | The Panel recommends that Council staff should work with the Center to list stocks where status is unknown, or poorly known, to understand more about them and to better characterize their status. This particularly applies to low information stocks that are or might act as choke species. Council and Center staff should work together to consider raising the priority of the resources applied to low information choke species. This recommendation highlights the importance of the partnership between the Council and the Center, and recognizes the limits of the Council's authority. | | In cooperation with the Center and GARFO, undertake a gap analysis to determine the way that resources are allocated across species/stocks, and whether such resources are optimally aligned or applied, with a view to potentially reallocating some resources from high information stocks to those most in need of improved assessments. The newly revised Stock Assessment Improvement Plan should be used as a tool to assist in the optimization of resources for stock assessments. | Low | Resource allocation within NEFSC is largely a function of budgets, beyond Council ability to influence. There appears to be little utility in this exercise given the effort it would take. | | | \$\$\$ | | |
| 13 | The Panel recommends that Council and Center staff should continue to work together to better align the need for scientific (biological, ecological, economic and social) information with Center and Council staff resources, with the outcome of streamlining the processes for acquiring the science and increasing efficiency (e.g. is it more effective or efficient for Center or Council staff to perform certain analyses?). | | For each management action, outline what is required and who is best placed to respond, taking account of both staff availability and the skills required. Include the responsibilities of each and the means of interaction and communication among all parties. The current use of Action Plans already provides a platform for this and can be easily expanded. Agreed upon requirements and responsibilities should only be modified if there is a good reason to do so. The Council and committees need to give more thought to the cost-benefit of adding new requests for data and analyses, as well as whether these new requests mean that previous requirements are now redundant or of lower priority. | Low | | | | \$ | | |

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| 14 | The Panel recommends that PDTs should be more proactive in requesting biological, ecological, social and economic data and analyses from the Population Dynamics and Social Sciences Branches of the Center as early as possible in the process so that the information is available in time and in formats appropriate to decision-making. | High | Essential science requirements should be identified up front as early as possible in the process of developing management actions and be included in Action Plans that are agreed with the relevant players. The Regional Operating Agreement between the Council, Region and Center is relevant in this regard. | Low/Medium | This is already done through development of action plans but this effort could be re-emphasized. Council considered but did not adopt evaluation of action plan process as part of 2020 priorities. | ED | | \$ | | |
| 15 | The Panel recommends that efforts to undertake Management Strategy Evaluations, such as that recently developed for herring, and to investigate the potential impacts of climate change and shifts in productivity, as well as the utility of Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management as is underway for Georges Bank, should be continued and expanded. Current and future uncertainties about stock structure also need to be investigated, particularly for cod stocks. | | Council staff should work with Center staff, the SSC and/or academics or contractors to facilitate the development of models and simulations that fully evaluate alternative operational models (including alternative stock structure assumptions) and the incorporation of uncertainty into assessments, and evaluate the implications of emerging issues such as climate change, shifts in productivity and distribution, and ecosystem impacts. | Low | Council is currently pursuing MSE for an example Fishery Ecosystem Plan (eFEP). In addition, Council may update MSE for Atlantic herring ABC control rule in future years. | NEFSC/NEFMC | | \$\$\$ | | |
| 16 | The Panel recommends that the Council and the Center should together explore mechanisms for specifying long-term rebuilding targets appropriately in situations where changes in species distributions, or productivity, or other substantive impacts are likely. | | Alternative rebuilding scenarios under various assumptions about movement and productivity over the time span of rebuilding plans should be developed as sensitivities to the base case. Even if these are not able to be formally incorporated into accepted rebuilding plans, they are likely to be useful for informing the Council and industry of the need for and extent of future potential modifications to rebuilding plans. It may also be useful to identify interim steps along the way that are achievable in the shorter term. | Medium | Possible future Research Track Assessment topic. | NRCC | | \$\$\$ | | |
| 17 | The Panel recommends that ways to redress issues concerning the level of support from the Center to the PDTs of the Council need to be developed. The Council should determine how it can better align the needs and tasks of the PDTs with the expertise, interests and reward structure of the Center. | | Council staff leadership should meet with Center leadership to scope out the issue and explore how Center staff can become more involved in ways that are rewarding, effective, and efficient. | Medium | Ongoing issue; GARFO, NEFMC, and NEFSC leadership routinely discuss staff coordination and shortfalls. | ED | | \$ | | |
| 18 | The Panel recommends that Council staff should, with assistance from the Center, Region and SSC as appropriate, examine the stock assessment/peer review processes that are followed, with a view to eliminating potential duplication, or better coordinating or streamlining processes. | High | Council staff should map out the processes followed and convene a joint meeting including Center and Regional staff, and possibly others to identify possible ways of increasing efficiency and uptake. (The Panel is aware that an NRCC working group will present a report regarding the stock assessment process at the May NRCC meeting; however, it is unknown how that report will address whether the process is cost-efficient and timely.) It is also possible that the national level Stock Assessment Improvement Plan may intersect with this issue. | Low | NRCC recently defined the assessment process and approved a more formal, longer term assessment schedule. | NRCC | | \$\$\$ | | |

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| 19 | The Panel recommends that staff from the Council and Center continue to develop mechanisms for increasing the level of trust of stakeholders in stock assessment inputs, processes, and results. | | Continue and expand current practices, such as empowering the New England Trawl Advisory Panel and increasing involvement in cooperative research programs. The Council and Center should demonstrate how this research has been utilized, including inviting stakeholders to stock assessment meetings, holding port meetings, and strengthening avenues for communication with stakeholders. | High | In several fisheries, lack of trust appears largely the result of a discrepancy between assessment results and fishermen's observations. Additional effort needs to be expended to reconcile differences. Cooperative research program and MREP may be tools to assist in resolving differences. Additional outreach to fishermen may also help. Likely a long term effort needed. | NEFSC with NEFMC support | | \$\$ | | |
| 20 | The Panel recommends that NEFMC staff leadership prepare a plan to achieve as seamless as possible transitions as NEFMC staff leave and are replaced by other staff. | High | NEFMC leadership should review how staff conduct major steps during action development and enact guidance to standardize these activities to ensure the steps are consistent as possible across FMPs. The Panel acknowledges that each FMP and action has its own unique features and thus FMPs cannot use identical procedures, but there are many aspects that could be made more consistent across staff and species. A needs assessment for existing staff and those foreseen in the future (i.e. longer term needs for the types of staff to hire) would also be useful. | Medium | ED took online course on succession planning for non-profit organizations. Additional cross-development of staff needed. | ED | | \$ | | |
| 21 | The Panel recommends continued development of the skills of the staff, including technical skills and training in effective ways to work in groups (teamwork) as well as how to communicate effectively with the public, particularly in terms of science communication. | | Offer training classes and seminars targeted at specific technical skills and on teamwork and communication. Proper selection of the courses is critical to ensuring good use of staff time and to add skills and practices to the staff of high relevance to their day-to-day activities. | Medium | Council budget includes funding for staff development. Some training sources have been identified and used by staff. Continued emphasis needed. One constraint is finding time for staff development given workload. | ED | | \$ | | |
| 22 | The Panel recommends that the Council consider options to partner with local and regional universities in terms of internships, graduate students, and faculty involvement to work on specific issues and species with staff. This can be a "win-win", as staff obtain in-depth information on issues and species, and outside participants gain experience in real-world fisheries management. | | The Council staff leadership should identify and approach academics (faculty and Directors/Deans of relevant graduate programs) individually to explore options. The focus should be on a menu of issues that need more in-depth review (e.g. EBFM, spatial allocation algorithms and economic and social data), with the recognition that Council staff time needs to be used efficiently and may need to be balanced against the time commitment required. Such activities should result in a product that is both useful to the NEFMC going forward and benefits outside participants (e.g. publishing and conference presentation for faculty; credits or thesis for students). | Low | Contract signed with URI for services of graduate student; Chair and ED initiated discussions with local university for internship program. Council has recently hired summer interns but a more formal relationship with academic institutions is being considered. | ED | | \$\$ | | |

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| 23 | The Panel recommends that Council staff periodically spend a day or two away from the office to reflect on the big picture and whether there are opportunities for improvements in the efficiency of processes. | | Council staff should use out-of-office days to map out the activities and pathways to the support (both from themselves and other entities) being provided on various issues with a view to determining whether there is unnecessary duplication or whether there are efficiencies that could be gained, or if some processes could be streamlined. Lessons learned, both positive and negative, from recent activities and interactions should also be discussed and procedures modified accordingly, or discussions subsequently initiated with relevant other entities. | Medium | First offsite held March 2019. Anticipate second offsite spring 2021. Follow-up on initial offsite needs more attention. | ED | | \$ | | |
| 24 | The Panel recommends that the Council review different options for populating the Advisory Panels to ensure that all interest groups are represented. | | Consult with other Councils and other similar organizations on how to more effectively generate interest in participation on Advisory Panels and identify why people are not participating. Given the decline in participation using the existing methods of advertising, new methods are needed, as well as exploration of how to reduce the time investment involved and other ways to make it easier to participate. Identifying the reasons why people do not participate or have stopped participating will help guide the development of new strategies for advertising and making participation more attractive. | High | Designated recreational industry seats identified for Habtiat and Herring APs, June 2019. | NEFMC | | \$ | | |
| 25 | The Panel recommends that standard protocols and formats for how Council staff requests, transfers, and maintains data be developed and implemented. This will reduce the potential for errors, which results in credibility issues, and allow for easier replication of analyses and interchanging of staff. | High | The Council staff leadership could identify two data-savvy staff members to develop several options for standard data transfer protocols (how data are requested, transferred, and stored) from NMFS (GARFO and NEFSC) to Council. The sub-field of data exchange is progressing rapidly and offers easy-to-use options that ensure consistency and allow for rapid QA/QC and other checks. | Low | No action planned. Data access does not appear to be an issue. | ED | | \$\$ | | |
| 26 | The Panel recommends that the Council engage with GARFO and NEFSC to improve the utility of centralized data collection and warehousing programs (i.e. ACCSP) to improve the speed and ease of obtaining data, as well as its consistency. | High | Continue discussion at NRCC meetings where ACCSP staff are engaging Council staff in discussions around centralized data collection. | Medium | Ongoing fishery dependent data project may partly address this issue. FDDI efforts expected to accelerate in 2020. | NRCC | | \$\$ | | |
| 27 | The Panel recommends that Council PDTs should explore the use of Fishery Performance Reports and/or Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) reports in providing updated social and economic information, including anecdotal and other information from user groups such as the Advisory Panels, to complement social and economic impact-related data that necessarily lag in time. | High | The Council should look to other Councils for approaches and best practices in obtaining and using timely social and economic information. | Low | This information is routinely updated in either SAFE reports or AE sections of management actions. Staff will explore use of fishery performance reports. | ED | | \$ | | |

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| 28 | The Panel recommends that Council staff work collaboratively with the Region and the Center, as appropriate, to reduce the time lags between the availability of landings and other data needed for stock assessments, ACL specifications, and socio-economic analyses. | | Council staff should work with the Region and possibly the Center to identify whether improved mechanisms can be developed to reduce time lags in the availability of data, particularly between the end of the fishing year and the availability of catch data for assessments and other purposes. This is also recommended for electronic data. This will necessarily involve broad cooperation because the same data sources are used by multiple councils and the ASFMC. The Panel understands that there is an ongoing Fishery Dependent Data Visioning Project that may provide, at least, an initial entry into discussions. Continued and possible expanded use of projections (stock, recruitment, catch) should also be considered as a way of shortening the time between the final year of a stock assessment and ACL specification or other determinations. | Low | Council will continue to communicate needs to NMFS, and will participate in data initiatives, but addressing data lags is out of Council's control. No additional action planned. | NRCC | | \$\$\$ | | |
| Term of Reference 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 29 | The Panel recommends that the Council develop ways to address issues that cut across all FMPs (e.g. monitoring, incidental catch, climate change, shifts in system productivity and EBFM) more efficiently and consistently. | High | Beginning with a few of the primary FMPs and the most critical and problematic issues that are common to all, map out a process for working across FMPs effectively. Other FMPs can then engage as time and resources allow. | Low | Extensive overlap in Committee membership facilitates cross-FMP coordination. Staff routinely work to address issues. Omnibus approaches have, at times, been difficult to complete. | Council | | \$\$ | | |
| 30 | The Panel recommends that Council staff develop guidance on PDT activities to ensure consistency across species and staff. This includes how data are analyzed how the results are interpreted, and the way the process interacts with the public during meetings. While each FMP has unique characteristics, there are also similarities that, if treated consistently, would add to transparency and reinforce that results are science-driven rather than dependent on the people involved. | High | PDT and Committee Chairs of several primary FMPs or all FMPs could meet to review the operations and process for issues most critical to consistent performance. | Low | Staff to consider standardization. Review of document structure underway. Documents prepared for 2019 actions implementing new format. | ED | | \$\$ | | |
| 31 | The Panel recommends the Council develop a more strategic approach to adjusting annual priorities during the year, in order to align time and resources more efficiently among annual regulatory requirements, ongoing and discretionary projects and new projects the Council is considering adding. This strategic approach should include adopting thresholds or criteria for adding new actions, and removing or setting aside lower priority actions to make room for new or revised actions that will take more time and resources. | High | The Council or Executive Committee, with staff help, should review the annual priority setting process and assess from the previous 2-3 years what kinds of changes the Council has made to priorities during the year, whether from stakeholder pressure, unforeseen circumstances or the inability to say 'no' to additional work, to understand why those changes occurred. With this information, develop criteria or rules for accepting additional new or revised priorities, as well as moving lesser priorities off the list for reconsideration the following year. | High | Initial discussion at Ex Comm March 27, 2019. Attempts to better characterize workload will be folded into 2020 priorities discussion. Initial attempt to estimate staff workload by 2020 project under evaluation. | ExComm | | \$\$ | | |

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| 32 | The Panel recommends that clear goals, objectives, purpose, and rationale be stated and agreed upon at the start of management actions and be repeated periodically as a reminder. There also should be stronger resistance to modifications that are not directly related to the original purpose as the action proceeds. Shared understanding of terms will enable actions to stay focused on their original purpose. | High | Provide guidance to staff on how to develop consensus using a standard process for formulating goals, objectives, purpose, and rationale for actions that uses a "glossary" that defines commonly used terms and phrases. | High | 1. Develop standard definitions for objectives, goals, etc. so they are used consistently across all actions. 2. Prepare process discussion paper to outline consistent approach for when goals, objectives, etc. are developed and, if necessary, modified. | Council/ED | | \$ | | |
| 33 | The Panel recommends that a process be put in place that is triggered by early warning signs of a troubled action and that there be an intervention mechanism, likely from Council staff leadership, to try to correct the issues early on in the development of the action. | High | Conduct post-mortem analyses on past actions that have gone wrong in order to guard against similar occurrences in the future. Use output from these analyses to develop new guidelines or modify SOPPs or policies in the NEFMC Operations Handbook, as appropriate. Consider setting target end dates for plan amendments that refer to actions that are not mandated. | High | Preference is to look forward, and it is unclear how to approach this. Will consider in the future. | ExComm | | \$\$ | | |
| 34 | The Panel recommends the Council and Council staff to look outward to other Councils, and to make use of inter-organizational coordinating committees, in order to further develop best practices. | | Expand the use of the Council Coordination Committee (CCC) and Northeast Region Coordinating Council (NRCC) as forums for identifying and exchanging best practices. For example, conduct a strategy session when NEFMC, MAFMC, and GARFO get together to talk about streamlining documents, especially related to NEPA. Look for opportunities for information exchange between NEFMC and other regions, perhaps as add-ons to other meetings. | Low | CCC, NRCC, etc. meetings are not appropriate venues to share lessons learned. Will emphasize more staff to staff interactions and collaboration to bring back lessons learned. Will support CCC-coordinated effort to sponsor periodic Council/staff forums. | ED | | \$\$-\$\$\$ | | |
| 35 | The Panel recommends the Council expand the use of discussion papers or similar approaches to scope out a problem or concern before initiating formal analysis on FMP or regulatory changes. | | The Council could review a series of past actions within one or more FMPs to assess whether there are clear examples of when a discussion paper would have been preferable before initiating analysis. From this exercise, some general criteria or categories of Council actions could be developed for when a discussion paper would be beneficial. Alternatively, the Council could simply recommend or direct that Committees explore the use of discussion papers for issues for which information is lacking or for which there isn't a common understanding of the problem. | Medium | Council will continue to use discussion papers to explore issues before launching a management action. Examples include Groundfish A8, Groundfish monitoring actions, GB spawning areas to protect herring, eFEP. | Council | | \$\$ | | |

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| 36 | The Panel recommends that steps be taken to ensure that there is consistency in how the subsidiary bodies interact with each other, and in their internal operations and processes. This should not limit the independence of Committees, PDTs, and APs to function in ways that best reflect their tasking and composition, but should instead formalize or strengthen the most critical aspects of their operations for the benefit of a consistent and reliable public process. | High | The Council and/or the Executive Committee should determine whether the first step is to review the SOPPs and Handbook, or to gather a small group of Chairs from these subsidiary bodies in several primary FMPs to assess where there are inconsistencies in how subsidiary bodies interact with each other in their operations or processes, and where potential overlap occurs. Also, the Council should continue to implement the recommendations of the "Tiger Team" where appropriate. | Low | Flexibility has its advantages. | ExComm | | \$\$ | | |
| 37 | The Panel recommends the Council assess the extent to which the actions taken by one body impact the work of other bodies, and develop a process to mitigate or address those impacts. | | The Council and/or the Executive Committee should determine whether the first step is to review the SOPPs and Handbook or to gather a small group of Chairs from these subsidiary bodies in several primary FMPs to assess this issue. | Low | This is not viewed as a major concern. Committee member overlap, and staff coordination, frequently highlights these concerns and addresses them. | | | \$ | | |
| 38 | The Panel recommends that the Council develop clearer lines of authority and accountability between the Council, Committees, PDTs, and APs to ensure that roles and responsibilities are better understood, that workflow between the subsidiary bodies is better defined and that issues that cut across Committees are adequately addressed. | High | The Council and/or the Executive Committee should determine whether the first step is to review the SOPPs and Handbook or to gather a small group of Chairs from these subsidiary bodies in several primary FMPs to assess where problems with lines of authority and accountability occur. | Medium/High | Find compromise approach so Committee addresses Council guidance but can identify issues Council needs to know about. | Ex Comm | | \$\$ | | |
| 39 | The Panel recommends the Council review the role of the SSC relative to that of the PDT, and to consider broadening the scope of SSC activities to include the review of social and economic dimensions of FMP amendments and regulatory changes. The Council should also consider other scientific and technical roles for the SSC to assist the Council in developing and assessing the effectiveness of Council actions to fulfill FMP objectives. | | Review the roles and responsibilities of the SSC and PDTs in other Councils across the country, and compare and contrast them with those of the NEFMC. | Medium | Pace and number of Council actions makes this difficult. Three ideas will be tested: 1. Review of FW analyses after submission in order to improve next action. This can avoid placing additional pressure action timelines. Anticipate first attempt spring/summer 2020. 2. Consider review of DEIS analyses between Council approval of DEIS and final vote on FEIS. This could lead to changes in the FEIS. Timing needs to be explore - might be done before or during DEIS comment period. 3. Consider embedding SSC members in PDT, to serve in an integrated peer review role. | ED | | \$\$ | | |
| 40 | The Panel recommends that Council members and staff take steps as necessary to ensure the accurate flow of relevant information between Council members and staff and external organizations including ASMFC and MAFMC. | | Develop standard ways to communicate to NEFMC staff and members key issues and decisions heard by individual staff that have cross-membership and act as liaisons on other councils and external committees. These can include short briefing memos and staff-wide debriefings for broad dissemination of information. This will reduce the chance of missed information and ensure all Council staff receive the same accurate information. | Low | This is not viewed as a problem given extensive use of liaisons and cross-Council representatives. No action planned. | | | \$ | | |

| # | Recommendation | Review Panel Priority Level* | Review Panel Suggestions - How to Implement | Council Priority Level | Council Suggestions - How to Implement | Who: lead organization/committee | Timing (short-term, intermediate, long-term) | Relative Cost (\$-\$\$\$)** | Date Started | Date Completed |
|----|--|------------------------------|---|------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 41 | The Panel recommends the NEFMC, ASMFC and MAFMC should follow through on the commitment to have leadership meet to develop more effective ways to collaborate on shared issues (e.g. Atlantic herring, winter flounder, and habitat issues). | High | A meeting of the Council leadership and ASMFC leadership should be scheduled (possibly using the NRCC meetings as opportunities) to clearly define effective and efficient collaboration norms. This should include shared participation and voting opportunities. | High | Ongoing; discussions to be held at every NRCC meeting; NRCC to explore scenario analyses as an approach to planning for this issue. NEFMC/MAFMC/ SAFMC leadership met at SAFMC 3/2019 to discuss management in the face of climate change. | | | \$\$ | | |
| 42 | The Panel recommends the Council engage with the MAFMC and ASMFC to develop a strategy to express a unified voice and coordinated action on shared issues including climate change, offshore energy, and marine mammals (i.e., right whales). | High | The leadership from the three management entities should meet to determine what issues of common interest could benefit from a unified voice and establish an approach for developing and approving the shared message. | High | Ongoing. Example: NEFMC and MAFMC coordinating on wind energy, habitat issues. Meeting 3/29/2018 to discuss regional EFH assessment. | | | \$\$ | | |
| 43 | The Panel recommends that steps be taken to increase transparency by not just making documents available but providing information in a more public-friendly manner. The Panel notes that availability of 100's to 1000's page of multiple documents does not automatically translate into transparency. | | Council staff should work with GARFO to reduce the size of NEPA and other documents, and explore ways (e.g., expanded executive summaries, graphics, condensed versions of decision documents) to provide simple explanations of complex issues without loss of critical information. The efforts of the Council staff in preparing simplified public hearing documents and decision documents is an excellent start; more can be done. Staff should be further trained in science communication. | Medium | Staff working to standardize document structure. This will include meeting with GARFO to streamline documents. Fall 2019 actions using new format, but additional work to follow. | ED | | \$\$\$ | | |
| 44 | The Panel recommends that the new Council member orientation should include best practices on appropriate and attentive behavior during presentations and the public comment periods of Council meetings and public hearings. | | The Council should recommend to NMFS that such best practices be included in new Council member orientation materials. The Council should also add best practices on appropriate and attentive behavior to the NEFMC Operations Handbook. | Low | ED will brief new members during orientation. | ED | | \$ | | |
| 45 | The Panel recommends that for all meetings, the scope of public input should be reviewed to ensure that it is appropriate to the scope and goals of the meeting. Participants should be informed that input would be restricted to the defined scope for that meeting. | | The Council could also have a rules of participation document that applies across all bodies that involve public participation. This document could include a commitment to protocols including the following examples: following up on agreements and tasks so the public knows how previous discussions were resolved (enacted or why not), adopting a constructive approach, listening and respecting the views of others, and avoiding repetition of earlier deliberations. | Low | ED to develop with Ex Comm. | ExComm/ED | | \$ | | |
| 45 | | | Outline the approach to public comment at the top of the agenda in regular font size (rather than in fine print in a footnote), and clarify whether the meetings are open to technical input only, or to views or opinions on management policies and alternatives. Clarify which other forums are available for providing individual input on issues not covered in a particular meeting. | Low | ED will work with PAO to implement by summer 2020. | ED | | \$ | | |

| # | Recommendation | Review Panel Priority Level* | Review Panel Suggestions - How to Implement | Council Priority Level | Council Suggestions - How to Implement | Who: lead organization/committee | Timing (short-term, intermediate, long-term) | Relative Cost (\$-\$\$\$)** | Date Started | Date Completed |
|---|---|------------------------------|--|------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 46 | The Panel recommends that the Council investigate the extent and causes of declines and other changes in public participation in the Council process, and how these could affect Council management actions. | | The Council should conduct surveys or other activities in order to assess the causes of any declines in public participation | Low | Will consult with APs on this issue and bring comments to Council for consideration. | ExComm/ED | | \$ | | |
| 47 | The Panel recommends the Council experiment with holding meetings of subsidiary bodies (e.g., AP, PDT, Committee, SSC) concurrent with a Council meeting and Council action on a specific agenda item. The purpose is to determine whether there is an improvement in common understanding among participants in the discussion and deliberation of Council actions, when the exchange of information among subsidiary bodies and the public occurs over a 2-3 day period. This model is used successfully in other Councils. | | The Council should choose a discrete agenda item and schedule meetings of the subsidiary bodies and Council in a 2-3 day period. | Low | This is a major change in how the Council operates. No interest at present in pursuing this recommendation. | Council | | \$-\$\$ | | |
| 48 | The Panel recommends an evaluation of past performance of management actions to show successes and problems using specific examples and to identify what factors in the process relate to success (so they can be repeated) and to problems (to avoid repeating them). More reflection on lessons learned by Council staff and leadership, including revisiting the two earlier reports (Touchstone, Tiger Team), would identify further best practices. It is important to present an overall evaluation showing successes and problems, and to learn from them for use into the future. | High | The Council should develop a small working group (Council members and staff, PDT members) to select one or two FMPs and conduct case studies to evaluate past performance. The case studies can be evaluated within the context of recommendations from earlier reviews, to guide the process. These case studies can later be expanded to a review of all Council FMPs. | Low | Council to consider revisiting Tiger Team recommendations as a priority for 2020. | Council | | \$\$ | | |
| 49 | The Panel recommends that the Council use the metrics developed in the 2012 FMP Performance Evaluation White Paper to develop a formal performance evaluation process. | | Council staff should review the White Paper and develop a formal performance evaluation process for the NEFMC FMPs. | Low | ED to consider external contract to implement during next grant cycle. | ED | | \$\$ | | |
| 50 | The Panel recommends further cooperation with the Social Sciences Branch of the NEFSC to explore use of economic and social indicators for performance evaluation. | | The Council should select priority social and economic metrics and seek assistance from the Social Sciences Branch to evaluate these metrics as resources allow. | Low | Will explore as part of development of #49 and #51. | NEFSC/NEFMC | | \$\$ | | |
| 51 | The Panel recommends the Council considers developing a summary document (report card) to highlight successes, stock status, and areas that still need attention. | | Staff should develop this report card and place it in a highly visible spot on the Council's website. | Low | ED to consider external contract to implement during next grant cycle. | ED | | \$ | | |
| Notes: *The review panel only marked high priority items, and did not have other levels. **Relative Cost: \$=1-2 staff/committees working for 1-2 months; \$\$= 2 or more staff/committees (internal, inter-agency, or contractor) working for ~3-6 months; \$\$\$= staff from multiple agencies/committees working for 6+ months. | | | | | | | | | | |
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