

Proposed East Coast Climate Core Team: Role and Operations

Draft for Climate Coordination Group Discussion, November 7, 2023, by the Scenario Planning Core Team

The Climate Coordination Group should consider establishing and identifying the role of a staff-level East Coast Climate Core Team. This has previously been referred to as the Climate Innovation Group, as proposed at the end of the East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Process in the [Potential Action Menu](#). The Core Team discussed that the naming of the two groups (this group and the East Coast Climate Coordination Group) is somewhat confusing, and **we propose re-naming the Climate Innovation Group to the East Coast Climate Core Team.**

The NRCC+ South Atlantic Council previously reviewed the proposal for the role of this group but did not discuss it in detail or make specific recommendations due to the group's focus on other issues. A draft role for this group is described below (adapted from the description in the Action Menu). Membership and operational considerations are also included for discussion.

Climate Core Team Mission and Tasks

The role of the Core Team would be to track important ecosystem and fishery changes, identify potential associated management and governance challenges, and identify possible actions for consideration by the Climate Coordination Group. Specifically, the Core Team would:

1. **Regularly review changes to the factors shaping East Coast fishery management, particularly those related to climate change.** Using the scenarios as a framework, the Core Team would assess whether conditions are changing in important ways, and highlight shifts that might push towards a different scenario. This could include monitoring ecological, oceanographic, and socioeconomic indicators, but could also include tracking various initiatives and tools that could be useful to apply when addressing the various action items. More specific indicators could be developed once the group is formed, but could include monitoring for changes in ocean conditions, new evidence of climate impacts, developments in technology, changing influence of new ocean users, changes in distribution of managed species and their habitat, changes in concerns or behavior of fishery participants and stakeholders, shifting policy environments, and more. Relevant evidence could be gathered from a variety of sources, including existing reports (e.g., State of the Ecosystem/Ecosystem Status Reports, Advisory Panel Fishery Performance Reports, academic literature, science center or SSC materials, etc.). Information should also be gathered via conversations and collaboration with stakeholders and existing groups, including fishing industry and community partners, management bodies and their committees/advisory bodies, NGOs, academic institutions, etc.
2. **Highlight potential actions that appear ready for near-term consideration.** These may be actions that were previously considered at the Scenario Planning Summit meeting and/or identified as lower priority in the Potential Action Menu, or they may be new ideas. Over time, some ideas may resurface as more important/more supported

than they were previously and/or the feasibility of implementing them may change. The group will also brainstorm and begin to scope out details of potential new actions that seem appropriate given the changing conditions.

3. **Present an update of changes and recommendations for actions to the Climate Coordination Group**, who will decide if any additional actions should be prioritized, resourced and executed. The Core Team could develop a more detailed implementation plan for a given action, if requested, following initial vetting by the Climate Coordination Group. A standard template could be created to propose a plan for a particular action including why it should be undertaken, who should be involved, and an estimate of time and resources needed.
4. **Periodically update the Potential Action Menu** based on ideas and priorities agreed to by the Climate Coordination Group.
5. **Participate on, or coordinate with, the teams implementing these actions where possible.** Staff supporting each action will vary and actions could include participation beyond the Climate Core Team. If an action is largely being developed by a group other than the Core Team, one or more Core Team members could join meetings of the action team, or use other means to stay up to date on progress. These members can share information with the full Core Team and Coordination Group.

Climate Core Team Membership and Operations

The East Coast Climate Core Team should consist of approximately 8-12 members of appointed staff from each of the three East Coast Councils, the Commission, the Greater Atlantic and Southeast Regional Fisheries Offices, the Northeast and Southeast Fisheries Science Centers, and NMFS Headquarters. Each organization should contribute at least one member.

Composition of membership would likely be similar to the existing East Coast Scenario Planning Core Team. Members should have expertise in fisheries management, climate science, ecosystem science, economics, social science, or other needed expertise as identified by the Climate Coordination Group. It may be necessary to have more than one member from a given partner organization to incorporate the desired range of expertise. The East Coast Climate Core Team should be limited to 15 standing members.

In addition to standing members, the Core Team could engage a broad range of colleagues and stakeholders for specific discussions as needed.

Once the role and membership of the Core Team is determined, the Climate Coordination Group should provide direction on operations considerations such as:

- **Meeting frequency:** The East Coast Climate Core Team should meet at least twice per year, and more often as needed. Most meetings could occur virtually. Smaller working

groups could meet more frequently to develop specific projects or ideas. These working groups can include non-members if needed.

- **Chairing:** The schedule for chairing the group should rotate, on an annual basis, potentially consistent with the rotating chairing schedule for the Climate Coordination Group.
- **Charter:** This document, as revised by the Coordination Group, can be appended to the Coordination Group charter, as the Core Team is a subsidiary body of the Coordination Group.
- **Workplan:** Annual document with descriptions of tasks, personnel/organizations involved, rough timelines for activities, communication opportunities, etc.

Engagement with Management Bodies

Given that the Climate Coordination Group includes leadership from each participating organization, the Coordination Group would have ultimate responsibility for determining how to best engage with the East Coast Councils and the Commission. The Core Team could make recommendations to the Climate Coordination Group on when and how to seek input from and collaborate with the Councils/ASMFC and their advisory bodies. Members of the Core Team could also share regular progress reports with management bodies.

The Climate Coordination Group should discuss their vision for effective engagement with management bodies moving forward.