

Guidance for use of the Council's Risk Policy (2025)

v. 2 Draft (June 2025)

On September 25, 2025, the Council voted to adopt a revised Risk Policy Statement and new Risk Policy concept that took effect on January 1, 2025, and tasked the Risk Policy Working Group to continue to refine the concept based on simulations testing.

The use and further development will be carried out in two concurrent phases (Alpha and Beta). The Alpha phase focuses on the use of the Risk Policy statement and scoring of factors using pre-defined guidance. The Beta phase includes the refinement of the weightings process, data flows, and connection to harvest control rules through simulation testing. The Beta phase will culminate with the quantitative implementation of the Risk Policy in conjunction with [Groundfish Framework 68](#).

Alpha Phase

Beginning on January 1, 2025, the Council and its subordinate bodies will utilize the Risk Policy Statement and Concept document adopted by the Council on September 25, 2025. The document can be accessed [at this link](#).

The focus of implementation will be consist of:

1. Utilizing the Risk Policy Statement and definition of stability in decision-making.
2. Preparation of the Risk Policy matrix for each stock/complex managed by the Council to accompany management actions. This includes the assembly of data for each factor using the guidance and rubrics provided in the approved concept document. The Alpha Phase will not include scoring by PDTs.

Alpha Phase Instructions for Plan Development Teams (Starting June 1, 2025)

- ❖ The Risk Policy matrix will be prepared and completed using the guidance and rubrics contained in the [approved concept document](#). The PDTs will not score the factors.
 - If data specified in the scoring rubric is not available, a PDT may consider an alternative data source that directly addresses the factor. Any deviation from the rubric should be documented, and can be passed along for consideration during continued development in the Beta phase.
 - For the Commercial and Recreational Fishery Characterization Factors, Plan Development Teams should respond to all questions and specify how the group approached each question (e.g. how were “warning signs” defined).
- ❖ The Risk Policy matrix will be a stand-alone document.

Other considerations for Plan Development Teams to support further Risk Policy development and testing during the Beta phase:

- ❖ The PDT should document places where data gaps exist for a stock/complex when assembling data using the rubric, and develop recommendations on alternative data that could be used. This may include suggestions of data consideration at the ecosystem level.
- ❖ The PDT should document any specific changes it recommends to factors, or questions it has about scoring factors. One example of this would be the questions used to score commercial and recreational fishery characterization. PDTs should not substitute their own factors or questions while the Risk Policy is in its Alpha phase (unless expressly instructed to by the Council).

Beta Phase

The Beta Phase responds to the Council's tasking to continue to refine elements of the concept while the Risk Policy is in use (Alpha Phase). The implementation of the Beta phase is expected to include updates to the Risk Policy factors and guidelines for scoring (e.g. questions, data), weighting of factors by the Council, and the linkage of the Risk Policy with updated groundfish ABC control rules. These changes are anticipated to occur no earlier than 2026. Changes or adjustments to the Risk Policy will not be made on a rolling basis unless explicitly instructed by the Council.

During the Beta development phase, input around Risk Policy development is expected from the Council and its Risk Policy Working Group, Science and Statistical Committee, Climate and Ecosystem Steering Committee, and Plan Development Teams. The Risk Policy Working Group and the UMaine contractors conducting simulation testing will work to consider and potentially fold feedback into what will be the Beta version of the Risk Policy. In practice, this may include updates to data sources used to score factors, or the factors themselves.

Development areas include:

- a. Simulation testing of the Risk Policy in the context of Groundfish ABC Control Rules (IRA Initiative 1 / 3).
 - a. Risk factors and underlying data.
- b. Weighting process
 - a. Scope (global weights for all managed species vs. FMP level vs. stock level).