

# Risk Policy Beta Implementation 2026 Workplan

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## Project Title and Brief Summary: Risk Policy Beta Implementation

On September 25, 2024, 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 simulation 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 factors, scoring and weighting process, data flows, and connection to harvest control rules through simulation testing. The Beta phase is expected to culminate with the quantitative implementation of the Risk Policy in conjunction with [Groundfish Framework 68](#).

## Project Owner:

Risk Policy Working Group, Staff lead: Jonathon Peros

| Name                 | Affiliation    | Areas of Support |
|----------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Megan Ware, Chair    | Council Member |                  |
| Dan Salerno, VC      | Council Member |                  |
| Jonathon Peros       | Council Staff  |                  |
| Melanie Griffin      | Council Member |                  |
| Bill Lucey           | Council Member |                  |
| Geoff Smith          | Council Member |                  |
| Moira Kelly          | GARFO          |                  |
| Dr. Jon Deroba       | NEFSC – PopDy  |                  |
| Dr. Joe Carracappa   | NEFSC – EDAB   |                  |
| Dr. Lisa Kerr        | SSC            |                  |
| Dr. Jason McNamee    | SSC            |                  |
| Dr. Kevin St. Martin | SSC            |                  |
| Dr. Gareth Lawson    | SSC            |                  |
| Dr. Naresh Pradhan   | Council Staff  |                  |

## Timeline:

Start Date: January 1, 2025 (Revised Risk Policy Takes Effect with anticipated refinement)  
Key Date: June 2026 (Risk Policy Concept v2 document is approved by the Council) TARGET  
End Date: October 10, 2026 (Quantitative implementation of Risk Policy by SSC as part of specifications).

## 1. Objectives & Goals

- The purpose of the Beta Phase project is to refine, revise, and approve changes to the Risk Policy Concept to allow for a quantitative application of the Risk Policy with Harvest Control Rules for stocks managed by the New England Fishery Management Council.

The following text comes from the current Risk Policy Concept:

- The Risk Policy (2025) aims to:

- 1) Better integrate changing environmental conditions into the Council's assessment of risk.
  - a. Factors in the revised risk policy allow for consideration of climate change and the dynamic environment in the Council decision process.
- 2) Develop a clear path to incorporate social and economic considerations.
  - a. Factors in the revised risk policy allow for consideration of socioeconomic concepts in the Council decision process.

Establish a process that integrates the consideration of risk throughout the Council's decision-making process, rather than at the end.

A clear policy on risk tolerance can guide the development of catch advice and management measures before final decisions. A scoring and weighting method increases transparency in how the Council assesses risk, increases efficiency, and reduces time delays resulting from remands.
- 3) Support implementation of a revised risk policy with available Council resources.

The 2016 Risk Policy Roadmap relied on management strategy evaluations (MSE) to quantify risk. This approach was not successful due to the limited resources and the time-intensive nature of completing MSEs. The Council believes that the 2024 Risk Policy will better match available resources.

## 2. Key Deliverable

| Deliverable                                       | Description                                                                                                                                                            | Due Date      | Owner | Status      |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------|-------------|
| Updated Risk Policy Concept document (v 2.0 Beta) | Revised RP Concept 2.0 document will add/change/correct information in the current Concept document and allow for use and integration of the Risk Policy with ABC CRs. | June 15, 2026 | RPWG  | In progress |

### 3. Milestones

| Milestone                                                                                                         | Target Date | Dependencies                                                                                             | Status                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Revised Risk Policy Takes effect                                                                                  | 1/1/2025    | Council Vote                                                                                             | Complete                             |
| Demonstration of Weighting                                                                                        | 4/15/2025   | Staff / RPWG prep                                                                                        | Complete                             |
| Evaluate the Council's updated Risk Policy and demonstrate factor scoring and integration with ABC Control Rules. | 10/20/2025  | IRA#1 Objective #1. Completed by UMaine.                                                                 | Draft white paper delivered to RPWG. |
| Based on UMaine evaluation, update Risk Policy Concept document (factors, scoring, weighting).                    | 4/15/2026   | RPWG makes changes based on white paper and feedback.                                                    | Starting                             |
| Council votes to update revised Risk Policy Concept document at June meeting.                                     | 6/15/2026   | Council receives draft of revised Concept.                                                               |                                      |
| Council Completes Weighting for 2026.                                                                             | 6/15/2026   | Council approves revised Risk Policy Concept.                                                            |                                      |
| Quantitative integration with ABC CRs at SSC- use in spec setting                                                 | 10/5/2026   | Adoption of revisions to Concept document.<br>-Weighting by the Council in 2026.<br>-Scoring by the PDT. |                                      |

### 4. Tasks & Activities

Within this section of the project plan, focus will be on tasks associated with non-completed Milestones.

#### 4.1 Evaluate the Council's updated Risk Policy and demonstrate factor scoring and integration with ABC Control Rules. (IRA #1, UMaine Project, Complete)

Tasks Associated with IRA 1, Objective 1 (UMaine Project).

- **Task 1:** Qualitatively and quantitatively evaluate the Council's identified risk factors and the proposed source materials for weighing and scoring those factors.
- **Task 2:** Summarize the Council's existing ABC control rules, consider how the updated Risk Policy can be integrated into each one, and characterize the degree of modification required to integrate the updated Risk Policy.
- **Task 3:** Prepare a white paper summarizing the findings from Task 1 and Task 2.
- **Task 4:** Prepare for presenting the white paper to the RPWG (at November meeting).

These tasks have been completed, and feed into the next steps of the RPWG.

## 4.2 Based on UMaine evaluation, update Risk Policy Concept document (factors, scoring, weighting) for quantitative use with ABC CRs.

### 4.2.1 Factors and Scoring

| <b>Task</b>                            | <b>Description</b>                                     | <b>Assigned To</b>              | <b>Start Date</b> | <b>End Date</b> | <b>Status</b>                    |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Review Factors                         | Confirm goals and objectives of each factor            | RPWG                            | 11/10/25          | 11/15/25        | Starting                         |
| Review Factors                         | Review factors for use in 2026 update.                 | RPWG, Sub-group work            | 11/16/25          | 1/23/26         | In progress.                     |
| Review Factor Data                     | Review and confirm data to be used in scoring factors. | RPWG, staff implementation team | 11/16/25          | 3/15/26         | Starting                         |
| Review shape of logistic curve         | See feedback from UMaine team, consider shape.         | RPWG, technical group           | 11/16/25          | 3/15/26         | Need to form technical sub-group |
| Review range of score for each factor. | See feedback from UMaine team, white paper             | RPWG, technical group           | 11/16/25          | 3/15/26         | Need to form technical sub-group |
| Consider scaling sensitivity           | See feedback from UMaine team, white paper             | RPWG, technical group           | 11/16/25          | 3/15/26         | Need to form technical sub-group |

### 4.2.2 Council Weighting Process

| <b>Task</b>                | <b>Description</b>                                                        | <b>Assigned To</b>           | <b>Start Date</b> | <b>End Date</b>    | <b>Status</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Finalize Weighting process | Feedback from Council, UMaine project                                     | RPWG                         |                   |                    | Starting      |
| Council Weights Factors    | Universal weighting. Needs to be done after/when the factors are updated. | Council staff, Council, RPWG |                   | April or June 2026 |               |

#### 4.2.3 (Post approval of Risk Policy Concept) Preparation of Quantitative Approach

| Task                            | Description                                     | Assigned To | Start Date | End Date           | Status   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|--------------------|----------|
| Score Factors                   | PDTs score factors                              | PDT         |            |                    | Starting |
| Calculate Z-Scores              | PDTs combine scores with weights, and then move | PDT         |            | April or June 2026 |          |
| Combine Risk Policy with ABC CR | Develop catch advice, memo to SSC               | PDT         |            |                    |          |

#### 5. Contingencies with Other Projects (and Related Work)

| Related Project                                      | Dependency Type                                  | Impact on Timeline                                                 | Point of Contact                                                                  | Mitigation Strategy |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| IRA#1 – UMaine simulation testing and ABC CR project | Sequential task completion.                      | Address White Paper input, take WG into 2026.                      | Robin Frede (Lisa Kerr, Roger Brothers)                                           | N/A                 |
| Groundfish FW68                                      | Regulatory Alignment                             | Consider the timing of Risk Policy Concept update                  | Robin Frede                                                                       |                     |
| Risk Policy Staff Implementation                     | Sequential task completion. (Update Risk Policy) | Ability to implement Risk Policy after adoption                    | Jonathon Peros<br>Andy Applegate<br>Julian Garrison<br>Lia Miller<br>Cate O'Keefe |                     |
| CESC, Communications sub-group                       | Sequential task completion. (Update Risk Policy) | CESC Comms sub-group should wait for Concept update in April 2026. | Michelle Bachman                                                                  | Early communication |
| Automation of Reports                                | Sequential task completion. (Update Risk Policy) |                                                                    | Lia Miller, Julian Garrison, Andy Applegate                                       |                     |
| Performance Report (linked to Risk Policy scoring)   | Sequential task completion.                      | Consider the timing of Risk Policy Concept update                  | Rachel Feeney, (SSC's SSS)                                                        |                     |

## 6. Risk Assessment

| Risk                                                  | Likelihood                                                                                                                                          | Impact                                                                                                                          | Mitigation Plan                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Delay in UMaine project                               | Low.                                                                                                                                                | High. Updates to Risk Policy and GF ABC CRs based on project outcomes.                                                          | Support UMaine work in 2025.                                                                                                            |
| Delay in revising Risk Policy Concept                 | Low/Moderate. There are several tasks that need to be completed to update the concept, and the document needs to be updated to reflect the changes. | High. Council using Risk Policy in Alpha mode until Beta is complete. This is the quantitative application of the RP with HCRs. | Considering streamlining number of factors being used (e.g. 5?).                                                                        |
| Delay of Council completing universal weightings      | Low/Moderate. Dependent on revisions to Risk Policy Concept.                                                                                        | High. Inability to fully apply Risk Policy Concept quantitatively.                                                              | No substitute for this. Early planning for weighting.                                                                                   |
| Challenges accessing information to complete scoring. | Low (hopefully). Changing assessment products from NEFSC.                                                                                           | Inability to fully apply Risk Policy Concept quantitatively, or unable to score a factor.                                       | Develop contingencies of what to do in this scenario (if needed) such as alternative data sources, or conditions when to drop a factor. |
| Delay of Groundfish FW68                              | Moderate. Final action on FW68 could be delayed by other groundfish priorities.                                                                     | If final approval of the Risk Policy Concept happens before FW68 final action, then no impact on project.                       | Review project timelines. Share options for how RP interacts with ABC CRs before they are approved.                                     |

## 7. Communication Plan

Coordination with the Climate and Ecosystem Steering Committee.

Stakeholders:

- New England Fishery Management Council
  - Science and Statistical Committee
  - Plan Development Teams
  - Advisory Panels
  - Committees
  - Council
- Federal Partners – NOAA Fisheries, MAFMC
- State Partners – ASMFC
- Interested parties, public
  - Fishing industry
  - NGOs

## 8. Notes & Assumptions

- UMaine project will be completed by April 2026.