

Risk Policy Beta Implementation

2026 Workplan (Updated June 12, 2026)

Project Title and Brief Summary: Risk Policy Beta Implementation

On September 25, 2024, the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) voted to adopt a revised Risk Policy Statement and new Risk Policy Concept. The statement and concept took effect on January 1, 2025, and the Council tasked the Risk Policy Working Group to continue to refine the concept based on simulation testing by contractors at the University of Maine (UMaine).

Starting in 2025, the use and further development of the Risk Policy has been carried out in two concurrent phases (Alpha and Beta). The Alpha phase has focused on applying of the Risk Policy statement qualitatively, primarily using Risk Policy Matrices and the Risk Policy Statement. The Beta phase includes the refinement of factors, scoring and weighting process, data flows, and qualitative interpretation. Connection to harvest control rules, which was initially part of Beta, will be a focus of the Council's work to revise ABC Control Rules for Northeast multispecies in Framework 68. The Beta phase is expected to be completed with an approval of revisions to the Risk Policy in June 2026 alongside a weightings exercise by the Council. Following this approval, the Risk Policy will be ready for qualitative implementation using the Z-scores from scores and weights that are translated into risk tolerance tiers. The Risk Policy Working Group is expected to be sunset following approval of the revised Concept.

Project Owner:

Risk Policy Working Group, Staff lead: Jonathon Peros. Contract support: Angelia Miller (Maris Collaborative)

Risk Policy Working Group Members	
Megan Ware, ME, <i>Chair</i>	Dr. Lisa Kerr (SSC)
Dan Salerno, NH, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Jonathon Peros (Council Staff)
Dr. Jonathan Deroba (NEFSC)	Dr. Naresh Pradhan (Council Staff)
Moira Kelly (GARFO)	Dr. Kevin St. Martin (SSC)
Melanie Griffin, MA	Dr. Joe Carracappa (NEFSC)
Dr. Jason McNamee (SSC)	Geoff Smith, ME
Bill Lucey, CT	Dr. Gareth Lawson (SSC)

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),

Qualitative implementation of Risk Policy begins summer of 2026.

1. Objectives & Goals:

The purpose of the Beta Phase project is to refine, revise, and approve changes to the Risk Policy Concept that will enable the qualitative use of Risk Tolerance Tiers by the Council in 2026. A quantitative application of the Risk Policy with Harvest Control Rules for stocks managed by the New England Fishery Management Council will continue to be pursued through the development of Groundfish Framework 68. The following text comes from the current Risk Policy Concept:

- The Risk Policy 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
Appendices	Provide instructions for scoring, weighting, PDT/SSC use, and documentation of mechanics.	June 15, 2026	RPWG	In progress
Outreach and Use	Engagement with Council bodies, share revisions to Risk Policy – PDTs, APs, SSC	August 2026	Staff + CESC	Planning

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.	Complete
Develop a worked example of Risk Policy with ABC CRs (SSC, Council)	3/30/2026	Clear guidance for mechanics, assumptions for scoring and ABC CR	Complete
Based on UMaine evaluation, update Risk Policy Concept document and appendices (factors, scoring, weighting).	4/15/2026	RPWG makes changes based on white paper and feedback.	Concept updated, drafting appendices.
Council votes to update revised Risk Policy Concept document at June meeting.	6/25/2026	RPWG drafts revised Concept.	On track
Council Completes Weighting for 2026.	6/25/2026	Council approves revised Risk Policy Concept.	On track
Engagement with Council bodies, share use instructions for Risk Policy – PDTs, APs, SSC	8/1/2026	Council approves revised Concept.	On track

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

Task	Description	Assigned To	Start Date	End Date	Status
Review Factors	Confirm goals and objectives of each factor	RPWG	11/10/25	1/23/26	Complete
Review Factors	Review factors for use in 2026 update.	RPWG, Sub-group work	11/16/25	1/23/26	Complete (5 factors).
Review Factor Data, updated guidance	Review and confirm data to be used in scoring factors.	RPWG, staff implementation team	11/16/25	6/15/26 (Updated)	Ongoing, on track.
Review shape of logistic curve	See feedback from UMaine team, consider shape.	RPWG, technical group	11/16/25	3/15/26	Complete.
Review range of scores for each factor.	See feedback from UMaine team, white paper	RPWG, technical group	11/16/25	3/15/26	Complete.
Consider scaling sensitivity	See feedback from UMaine team, white paper	RPWG, technical group	11/16/25	3/15/26	Complete.

4.2.2 Council Weighting Process

Task	Description	Assigned To	Start Date	End Date	Status
Finalize Weighting process	Feedback from Council, UMaine project	RPWG		6/3/26	Complete
Council Weights Factors	Universal weighting.	Council staff, Council		6/25/26	On track.

4.2.3 (Use of Risk Policy Concept) Preparation of Qualitative Approach

Task	Description	Assigned To	Start Date	End Date	Status
Toolkit Score Factors	Online tool for PDTs to score factors	Angelia Miller and Council Staff	1/23/26	June 15, 2026	Ongoing, On track
Toolkit - Calculate Z-Scores	Online tool for calculating Z-scores based on scores and weights	Angelia Miller and Council Staff	1/23/26	June 15, 2026	Ongoing, On track
Guidance Documents	Overview of Qualitative Use and Risk Policy Interpretation	RPWG	5/27/26	6/10/26	Drafted, On track
Guidance Documents	Appendices outlining instructions, mechanics	RPWG	3/9/26	6/10/26	Drafted, On track

Note: Quantitative application of the Risk Policy will occur with integration of the Risk Policy with ABC Control Rules. This is being considered in Groundfish FW68.

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	Sequential task completion.	Address White Paper input, take WG into 2026.	Robin Frede (Lisa Kerr, Roger Brothers)	N/A
Groundfish FW68	Regulatory Alignment	Timing of Risk Policy Concept update	Mark Grant	N/A
Risk Policy Staff Implementation	Sequential task completion. (Update Risk Policy)	Ability to implement Risk Policy after adoption	J. Peros, A. Applegate, J. Garrison, A. Miller, C. O'Keefe	
CESC, Communications sub-group	Sequential task completion. Update Risk P.	wait for Concept update in June 2026.	Michelle Bachman	Early comm.
Automation of Reports	Sequential task completion.		Lia Miller, Julain Garrison, Andy Applegate	
Fishery 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

Following the June 2026 Council meeting, Council staff will begin engagement with stakeholders to support the qualitative implementation of the Risk Policy in 2026. This will involve meetings and communications to relevant parties. Staff will also coordinate 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