

RSA Program Review DRAFT Report Outline

I. Findings and Recommendations

II. Introduction

- a. What is RSA
- b. History of RSA
- c. Potential roles for RSA- develop a table of the information needs that RSA has fulfilled and identify areas that have not yet been addressed -e.g., resource surveys, stock assessment analyses, ecological research, fishery monitoring, conservation engineering (e.g, avoid bycatch), industry support (e.g., new products, marketing, understanding grey meats)
- d. Reasons for Reviewing RSA
- e. Review Methodology
 - i. Refer to Executive Committee Guidance (Appendix 1)
 - ii. Review participants (Appendix 2)
 - iii. Describe work plan (Appendix 3)

III. Description of RSA Programs by Fishery Management Plan

- i. Brief description of fisheries and how they are managed
 - 1. Scallop FMP
 - 2. Herring FMP
 - 3. Monkfish FMP
- ii. Purpose of RSA as stated in the FMP (summarize in table)
 - 1. Scallop FMP
 - 2. Herring FMP
 - 3. Monkfish FMP
- iii. Amount of RSA by FMP (summarize in table)
 - 1. Scallop FMP
 - 2. Herring FMP
 - 3. Monkfish FMP
- iv. RSA Planning and Priority Setting by FMP
 - 1. Scallop FMP
 - 2. Herring FMP
 - 3. Monkfish FMP

v. Program Implementation

1. Roles and responsibility
 - a. NEFMC, NEFSC, and GARFO
 - b. NEMFC staff
 - c. Council members, committee members, advisory panel members, others associated with NEFMC
 - d. Legal (GCNE, FLAD)
2. Valuing and monetizing (converting it to cash) RSA currency (fishery resource)
 - a. How is it valued during procurement?
 - b. In practice, how do projects use RSA currency?
 - c. What are the risks associated with RSA currency? How reliable are the different set asides in generating funds to support research and adequately compensate industry partners?
 - d. How do projects report on use of RSA currency?
 - e. Estimate the ratio of “research” to RSA fishing costs (i.e., how much research does a \$1000 worth of RSA currency really buy?)
 - f. Implications of paying for research with RSA currency (e.g., is the universe of potential researchers limited?)
3. Procurement of Projects – Funding vehicles
 - a. Background on the reason for using grants (FAQs, ID pros and cons)
 - b. Legal requirements and restrictions that apply to grants
 - c. Other procurement vehicles that were considered and rejected, and why
4. Project selection
 - a. Technical review
 - b. Management relevance review
 - c. Avoiding conflict of interest
5. Project monitoring
 - a. Review for deliverables
 - b. Monitoring of financial integrity
 - c. Distributing and Archiving RSA products
6. Evaluation of the transaction costs- Staff time (NEFMC, NEFSC, GARFO) required. Grant recipients also spend additional time on proposal modifications etc.

vi. RSA Results (likely as an appendix)

1. Scallops- List of projects, including
 - a. Time period
 - b. Amount of funding
 - c. Priority according to announcement of opportunity
 - d. Classification of project purpose according to table in II.c.
 - e. Organization/Investigators receiving RSA

- f. Participation of NEFSC scientists
 - g. Access to final report (where is it archived?)
 - h. Evaluation of impact on scientific advice and management-
High, Medium, Low, None with rationale
- 2. Herring FMP- a-h as for scallops
- 3. Monkfish FMP- a-h as for scallops

IV. Getting the most out of RSA in the future

- a. Role of RSA
 - i. Experience with RSA to date and how well it has performed with respect to alternative roles (ranging from direct support and use in stock assessments to research supporting industry marketing needs)
 - ii. “Preferred alternative” when it comes to the priority roles of RSA
- b. Type of RSA Activities
 - i. Experience with RSA to date and how well it has performed alternative types of activities
 - ii. “Preferred alternative” when it comes priority activity types for RSA
- c. Maximizing the value of RSA currency- Based on experience to date, what can be done to maximize value?
- d. What can be done to maximize the pool of scientific participants in RSA (see II.v.2.e)? Are there ways to expand the pool of applicants?
- e. Program planning and priority setting- Based on experience to date, how can planning and priority setting be improved to focus results on scientific and management needs.
- f. Harmonizing procurement (e.g., grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, whatever) with RSA priorities and to improve utilization of RSA products.
- g. Optimizing transaction costs (i.e., reduced without sacrificing quality and integrity) and options for supporting transaction costs.
- h. Assuring program integrity (i.e., avoiding conflicts of interest, getting deliverables, applying fiscal controls).
- i. Assuring RSA products are useful and used

The review team will develop a matrix that cross references each of the approximately 25 questions in the Guidance with sections of the report outline.

Appendix 1. RSA Review Guidance issued by NEFMC Executive Board



New England Fishery Management Council

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Research Set-Aside Program

Review Guidance

2/22/2018

The New England Fishery Management Council uses research set-aside (RSA) programs in three fisheries (Sea Scallops, Monkfish, and Atlantic Herring). The programs use a set-aside of fishery resources (quota or days-at-sea) to generate revenue that is used to conduct needed research. While the programs are generally viewed as successful, the Council is interested in examining the programs in order to identify potential improvements.

The review will be conducted by a panel of six members: two each from the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC), Greater Atlantic Regional Office (GARFO) and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC). The panel will work via correspondence, conference calls, webinars, or meetings at the discretion of the panel members. One of the NEFMC representatives will organize and chair any meetings, webinars, or conference calls of the panel.

The panel, working under the direction of the Executive Committee, will prepare a written report that addresses the questions identified by the Executive Committee (see below) or identified by the panel. All questions should be addressed for each RSA program. The panel may also address other RSA issues after conferring with the Monkfish, Herring, or Sea Scallop Committees. The report should delineate the existing processes and recommend any changes. The panel should identify those changes that may take a management action and those that can be implemented without an action. The report should be completed by May 15. If possible, the draft report will be discussed with the Sea Scallop, Monkfish, and Herring Committees prior to presentation to the Council at the June 2018 Council meeting. This target date was chosen so that improvements can be considered for the next RSA cycle.

Program Administration

- What are the roles of the NEFMC, GARFO, and the NEFSC? Are these appropriate?
- How are research priorities determined for each program?
- How are technical reviewers identified?
- How are management reviewers identified?
- How are technical and management evaluations combined to select grant award recipients? What is the process used to make awards?
- Is conflict of interest an issue in the review process; can improvements be made?
- Can the award decision process be improved from the perspective of awarding the highest quality science best linked to program priorities?
- Are measures in place to ensure financial accountability of award recipients? Are financial requirements of the program being met? Is required financial documentation submitted? Are audits of the grantees institutions required or desirable?
 - Does the public understand how the program works? Is the process transparent? What improvements could be made?
- What problems or difficulties are experienced by the program administrators? What improvements could be made?

Program Structure

- Are projects used for research or for routine fishery science and management purposes (i.e. is the RSA program used for research or to supplement agency funding)?
- What factors limit or promote the interest of industry in participating in the RSA Program?
- Is it possible to extend the period funding for proposals in general and survey proposals specifically?
- Are sufficient resources set aside to provide meaningful grant opportunities?
- Currently the program is run as a competitive grant program. Are there alternatives that could be used? Is there a way to use contracts within the RSA program? If a grant must be used, can the RFP be written more narrowly to accomplish specifically designed tasks?
- Is there sufficient funding to support the administration of RSA programs, which have grown over the years? Is there a way to use RSA awards to support program administration, potentially including the staff support with review and selection of proposals, follow-up with recipients, dissemination of research results, education and outreach for new participants?
- Are state requirements and management objectives taken into account in the awards?
- Are there ways to increase the value of RSA compensation fishing so that more dollars are provided for research?
- Is compensation fishing consistent with the goals and objectives of the respective FMPs and the RSA programs?

Results

- How are completed projects evaluated to make sure goals of the program are achieved?
- For the last five years, what projects have been completed? How many of these projects were used in the assessment or management of the fishery?
- What is the breakdown on the number and amount of awards to each recipient? Is participation in the program (number of applicants, number of successful applicants, etc.) changing?
- Are the results of the programs meaningful to the fisheries?
- Is there a way to determine whether the research projects have been cost effective and if so, what are the findings for recent awards?
- What metrics are used to evaluate the performance of award recipients? Is past performance considered when making future awards?

Appendix 2: Review Team

Council Member Participants:

1. Michael Sissenwine- Review Chair
2. Vincent Balzano- Scallop Committee Chair
3. Peter Kendall-Herring Committee Chair
4. Eric Reid- Monkfish Committee Chair

Council and Agency Staff Participants:

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Appendix 3: General Work Plan

The RSA Review Team is still finalizing the major milestones and timeline.

The tentative schedule is to present the final report at the December 2018 meeting.