

# Terms of Reference for the Social Science Planning Team

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

(December 2018)

1. **Establishment and Mission.** The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) shall establish a Social Science Planning Team according to the following mission statement:

*The Social Science Planning Team (SSPT) is established to improve the quality and application of social science data that informs management decision-making and program evaluation. The SSPT is constituted of representatives who will strategize medium- and long-term improvements in data collection and analytical methodology, allowing the NPFMC to better meet its own program objectives as well as LAPP review requirements defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Act and recommended in NMFS guidelines. The SSPT will identify data needs, make recommendations regarding research priorities, and advise analysts in efforts to improve analytical frameworks when possible. The SSPT will support the collection and aggregation of social science data in a manner that cuts across Fishery Management Plans and specific management programs within the North Pacific region.*

2. **Membership.** SSPT members will be appointed from public organizations and academic institutions having expertise in diverse social science fields such as anthropology, sociology, economics, and human geography. Normally, the SSPT will include at least one member from the Council staff, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Alaska Regional Office (AKRO), NMFS' Alaska Fishery Science Center (AFSC), the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Alaska Fisheries Information Network (AKFIN), and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G). The Council may also consider members who are Tribally-affiliated (defined as being nominated by a Tribe or Alaska Native organization), as well as from North Pacific Research Board (NPRB) and other agencies or institutions as appropriate. With the consent of the sponsoring agency or institution, nominations may be made by the Council, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), the Advisory Panel (AP), the SSPT, or the public. All nominations will be subject to approval by the SSC, with the Council retaining final appointment authority. Appointments should reflect the SSPT's responsibility to provide advice and expertise from a range of social sciences and study areas.
3. **Organization.** The SSPT will be directed by a chairperson or co-chairs nominated from among its seated members. A designated Council staff member will provide coordination support to the chair. That individual will be the primary point of contact for scheduling and reporting and will make presentations to the Council and the SSC if the chairperson is not available.
  - a) **Rules of order.** In general, rules of order will be informal. SSPT decisions will be reached by consensus, whenever possible. If a decision is required and consensus cannot be reached, the opinion of the majority will prevail. Minority views on recommendations or statements made by SSPT members will be reflected in the publicly available meeting minutes. In representing the SSPT publicly, the spokesperson will take care to relate SSPT opinions accurately, noting points of concern where consensus cannot be reached.
  - b) **Meetings.** SSPT will hold one annual in-person meeting. The SSPT also intends to have one interim teleconference to discuss meeting logistics and agenda for the annual in-person meeting. In-person meetings will normally be held in Anchorage, Juneau, or Seattle. The location will be determined on the basis of cost, members' ability to travel, and opportunities to collocate with other fishery meetings in order to maximize efficiency and participation.

- c) **Agenda.** A draft agenda will be prepared in advance of each meeting by the chairperson with consultation by SSPT members, and subject to final approval by Council chair. Agenda topics may be formally generated by Council members or informally generated through suggestions from SSPT members, the SSC, the AP, other Council Committees and Plan teams, or public testimony. At the interim teleconference, SSPT members may provide input on the agenda and logistics for the annual in-person meeting. SSPT chair and staff coordinator (with the approval of the Council Chair) will set the agenda based on interest expressed, available expertise, and available meeting time. Recommended agenda items will also be considered with regards to the SSPT's core purpose.
- d) **Public participation.** SSPT meetings will be open to the public and will be noticed in the Federal Register. Written comment submitted to the SSPT will be accepted and distributed by staff to SSPT members. As per the Council's written comment policy, any such written comment will also be provided to the Council as an appendix to the SSPT's report. Oral testimony during meeting will be accepted at the discretion of the chair.
- e) **Selection of officers.** SSPT chairperson will be selected at the meeting preceding the SSPT meeting or as vacancies arise. The SSPT chairpersons will be selected for two-year terms. There will be no limit on the number of consecutive terms the chairperson may serve.
- f) **Meeting report.** A report of each meeting will be prepared by the Council staff or designee into a draft, distributed to SSPT members, and revised as necessary before finalized. This report will be made publicly available and will be presented at a subsequent Council meeting, providing additional opportunity for public input.
4. **Functions.** The SSPT's function is to facilitate and enhance the use of social science data in the management process. The SSPT will strategize medium- and long-term improvements in data collection and analytical methodology, allowing the Council to better meet its own program objectives as well as Limited Access Privilege Program (LAPP) review requirements defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Act and recommended in NMFS guidelines. For instance, the SSPT may:
- Identify deficiencies in collected social science data; recommend priority of need to address gaps;
  - Review existing data sets in regard to their quality and utilization (or underutilization) in analyses;
  - Recommend revisions to data collections where possible, recognizing that the Council does not directly administer all relevant social science data collection efforts;
  - Establish analytical best practices;
  - Support staff with advice and feedback on analytical methodology during the planning stages of complex projects and LAPP reviews, as requested by staff and when befitting the project development timeline;
  - Maintain an understanding of current and ongoing social science research in areas relevant to North Pacific fisheries management;
  - Serve as a network that makes newly developed resources accessible to the NPFMC process through a variety of means; or
  - Provide feedback on Council's research priorities in the form of comments provided to the SSC.