

# Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Plan Teams

for Groundfish Fisheries of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska  
(October 2014)

1. **Establishment.** The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) shall establish Plan Teams for the groundfish fisheries of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA). The Plan Teams will provide the Council with advice in the areas of regulatory management, natural and social science, mathematics, and statistics as they relate to the groundfish fisheries of the BSAI and GOA.
2. **Membership.** Plan Team members will be appointed from government agencies and academic institutions having expertise relating to the groundfish fisheries of the BSAI and GOA. Normally, each Plan Team will include at least one member from the Council staff, the regional office of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), NMFS' Alaska Fishery Science Center, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Washington Department of Fisheries, the International Pacific Halibut Commission, the University of Alaska, the University of Washington, and other institutions and universities. 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), or the Plan Teams themselves. All nominations will be subject to approval by the SSC, with the Council retaining final appointment authority. Appointments should reflect the Plan Teams' responsibility to provide advice in the areas of regulatory management, natural and social science, mathematics, and statistics.
3. **Organization.** Each Plan Team will be directed by a chairperson or co-chairs, and may divide some of its responsibilities among work groups organized according to subject matter. A work group may include members from more than one Plan Team. Each work group will be directed by a work group leader.
  - (a) **Rules of order.** In general, rules of order will be informal. Plan Team 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. In representing either Plan Team publicly, the spokesperson will take care to relate Plan Team opinions accurately, noting points of concern where consensus cannot be reached.
  - (b) **Meetings.** Plan Team meetings will be held prior to Council's September and December meetings. The Plan Team chairpersons may call other meetings as necessary. The two Plan Teams may meet either separately or jointly. A draft agenda will be prepared in advance of each meeting by the Council staff in consultation with the respective chairperson or chairpersons, and may be revised by the Plan Team(s) during the meeting. Each agenda will include an opportunity for comments from the general public. Minutes of each meeting will be prepared by the Council staff, distributed to Plan Team members, and revised as necessary at or before the subsequent Plan Team meeting.
  - (c) **Selection of officers.** Officers (Plan Team chairpersons and work group leaders) will be selected at the meeting preceding the September Council meeting or as vacancies arise. The Plan Team chairpersons will be selected for two-year terms. Work group leaders will be selected for one-year terms. There will be no limit on the number of consecutive terms that officers may serve.
4. **Functions.** The Plan Teams' primary function is to provide the Council with the best available

scientific information, including scientifically based recommendations regarding appropriate measures for the conservation and management of the BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries.

- (a) SAFE report. The Plan Teams compile SAFE reports for the BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries on an annual basis. The SAFE reports provide the Council with a summary of the most recent biological condition of the groundfish stocks and the social and economic condition of the fishing and processing industries. The SAFE reports summarize the best available scientific information concerning the past, present, and possible future condition of the groundfish stocks and fisheries, along with ecosystem considerations/concerns. This includes recommendation of acceptable biological catch and, where appropriate, total allowable catch levels. All recommendations must be designed to prevent overfishing while achieving optimum yield (National Standard 1). All recommendations must also be scientifically based (National Standard 2), drawing upon the Plan Teams' expertise in the areas of regulatory management, natural and social science, mathematics, and statistics. Finally, uncertainty must be taken in account wherever possible (National Standard 6).
- (b) Plan amendments. At the direction of the Council, the Plan Teams may also play a role in the development and evaluation of amendments to the BSAI and GOA groundfish fishery management plans.