



Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N | Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0780 | 703.842.0779 (fax) | www.accsp.org

Coordinating Council Meeting Thursday, May 15, 2014 1:15 PM – 2:15 PM

**Crowne Plaza Hotel Old Town
901 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, Virginia**

AGENDA

1. Welcome/Introductions (*Chair C. Patterson*)
2. Council Consent **Action**
 - Approval of Agenda (Attachment I) **ACTION**
 - Approval of Proceedings from February 2014 (Attachment II) **ACTION**
3. Public Comment* (*C. Patterson*)
4. ACCSP Status Report
 - Program Update (*M. Cahall*)
 - New Program Assistant
 - Current Projects Update
 - MRIP Proportional Standard Error
 - SAFIS Hand-Held Trip Reporting
 - Lobster Trap Tag Transferability
 - NOAA Fisheries Funding Awards
 - MRIP For-Hire Data Integration
 - Fisheries Information System End User Query Rebuild
 - FY2014 Final Funding
5. ACCSP Committee Update (*T. Hoopes*)
 - Consider Approval of 2014-2018 Outreach Strategic Plan (Attachment III) **ACTION**
6. Independent Program Review Progress (*T. Hoopes*)
7. Review and Consider Approval of Modified 2014-2018 Strategic Plan (*C. Patterson*) (Attachment IV) **ACTION**
8. Review and Consider Approval of 2015 Request for Proposals and Funding Decision Document (*C. Patterson*) (Attachment V) **ACTION**
9. Distribution of 2013 Fiscal Year in Review (*A. McElhatton*)
10. Other Business/Adjourn

*See Public Comment Guidelines:

http://www.accsp.org/documents/ACCSP_PublicCommentPolicyOct2013.pdf

Our vision is to produce dependable and timely marine fishery statistics for Atlantic coast fisheries that are collected, processed, and disseminated according to common standards agreed upon by all program partners.

ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM
COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETING

Crown Plaza Hotel Old Town

Alexandria, Virginia

FEBRUARY 4, 2014

- - -

The Coordinating Council of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program convened in the Presidential Ballroom of the Crown Plaza Hotel Old Town, Alexandria, Virginia, February 4, 2014, and was called to order at 4:35 o'clock p.m. by Chairman Cheri Patterson.

CHAIRMAN CHERI PATTERSON: Okay, if we can start the Coordinating Council Meeting, please. Welcome! I'm Cheri Patterson, the Chair of the Coordinating Council. We have a couple of people that are not going to be here. Bob Mahood couldn't make it out. We're not sure if Robert Boyles is going to make it and Lou Goodreau from the New England Fisheries Management Council won't be able to make it.

Okay, if we can move on to approval of the agenda, we have two changes. We're going to have Tom Hoopes present the strategic plan, which is Item Number 5, and we're going to have Mike Cahall present the operations committee review of the state conduct of MRIP, which is Item Number 6. With those changes stated; is everybody okay with approving the agenda? Thank you. Do we have any public comment? Do we have anybody from the public that would like to come up and speak? Okay, let's move on to having the ACCSP Update Report with Mike Cahall.

MR. MIKE CAHALL: This will be a fairly brief update as you guys met just a few months ago. Most of the program activities have focused on items that are being presented today. Most recently the Recreational Technical Committee completed the first draft of a State Conduct Transition Plan. This has been the result of, frankly, some extraordinary effort on their part.

The Operations Committee completed the Strategic Plan, which is also in front of you. Again, this has been an extraordinary effort on their part. It includes the vast majority of the recommendations that were incorporated into the Independent Program Review. In terms of other things that are going on, we're in the middle of the Handheld Trip Reporting Development Project in Rhode Island, which appears to be going quite well.

The prototype system now is working and we're working on the data interchange pieces so that they can directly update into the SAFIS Electronic Trip Reporting System. The program review progress, we will be convening the Independent Program Review Panel shortly. We wanted to wait for the Strategic Plan to be approved in order to incorporate the Independent Program Review recommendations into an update.

A number of them, as I said before – and Tom will go into some more detail – are integrated into the strategic plan. Last fall I participated in a review of all of the Fisheries Information Networks. For those of you who aren't aware, there are five Fisheries Information Networks. We are the Atlantic Coast version.

There is one in the Gulf, one in the Pacific, one in Alaska and a fifth in the Western Pacific. NMFS Office of Science and Technology conducted a review of those Fisheries Information Networks to see primarily how they were doing with commercial data. We had a day and a half in Portland, Oregon, in September.

It was actually fairly interesting in the sense that I got a much broader overview of what is going on in the other groups. They are structured significantly differently from us in many respects. Although their fundamental mission of data collection and dissemination is essentially the same, how they're going about conducting business is significantly different.

I think for those of you who have had time to actually read the reviewers comments, a lot of those touch on what are essentially some of the differences between how ACCSP does things and how some of the other networks do. It was also a really good opportunity to collaborate with our colleagues and discuss issues that we all have in common; and there will be more of that in the future, I'm sure of it.

For any of you that have any questions about the FIN Review, feel free to ask me. Also, we are preparing a consolidated response from all of the Fisheries Information Networks as a single document, and the program itself is preparing a document from the executive committee that responds directly to the FIN Review.

I'd like to say in general the recommendations from the FIN Review are already incorporated into the recommendations from the Independent Program Review. There are a few items that are not and the Independent Review Panel Monitoring Group is going to review those in upcoming weeks and see how we can make sure that they're actually addressed as well. That actually is pretty much the update for that. Are there any questions?

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Thank you, Mike. Okay, we will move on to have Tom Hoopes review the Strategic Plan.

MR. TOM HOOPES: I don't have any specific slides. I just figured I'd run through the document that you have in front of you and give you an idea of how we arrived at this draft document. A subcommittee of the Operations Committee met back in early November. We spent a day down here in Arlington at the ACCSP/ASMFC office and hammered out this draft.

Essentially what we did was we took the previous strategic plan as a template and used that and broke this into two pieces, as you can see, the introduction and then Section 2, goals and strategies, which is on Page 3. The first four sections of the introduction should look very familiar to you.

There is a reference to a milestone chart in Appendix 1, which is not in this document, so we will definitely put that in the next version. There are some significant accomplishments that this program has accomplished; and it is a very impressive list, I think. It set up the last section of the introduction, which is really the beginning of the document, which is Section E, and the driving forces and critical success factors. We derived that partly from the past strategic plan but catered it more to current issues and new issues. Those are detailed more right after that, towards the end of the section. I won't rehash those unless you'd like me to. I was going to ask if anybody has any questions about those.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Are there any questions or comments to Tom at this point? Okay, go ahead.

MR. HOOPES: All right, and then addressing those driving forces and critical success factors, we came up in Section 2 with goals and strategies. We defined seven goals. There is a typo that says that there are six goals. Originally we had six and added a seventh at our Operations Committee meeting back on January 21st. That was Goal 2, which is now Goal 2 and 3.

Basically, these goals again, in some ways point to previous goals, but obviously goals that are more germane today and issues that revolve around the program today and what we expect to work on over the next five years. The first one is about managing a fully integrated data set and the second gets into work with program partners to improve fisheries data collection.

The third gets into funding issues and the fourth looks at maintaining and engaged in active executive leadership and collaborative involvement among partners at all committee levels. The fifth is getting at the products that ACCSP produces and maintains. The sixth is all about outreach and education. The seventh is work with nation-wide systems.

The strategies that we piled into these goals or answering or addressing these goals were basically all of the recommendations from the Independent Program Review. We took all those recommendations and fit them into these goals as best we could and then remolded them, put them in laymen's terms and came up with what you have here. That is basically it.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Thank you, Tom. This is going to be an action item that we kind of need to pay attention to. Are there any recommendations, any questions, any comments, any changes you'd like to see? Just to let you know that at the executive committee level, we did have some suggested changes; so we're looking for more. Paul.

MR. PAUL DIODATI: I don't have a change, but it seems like we might want to present those changes that came out of the executive committee; and if no one objects, we should move ahead to approve the strategic plan. No one has seen the changes that we talked about in the last hour.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Okay, I'm going to put people on the spot that were on the executive committee that suggested some changes. I'm going to start with Mark.

MR. MARK ALEXANDER: Okay, I opened my mouth there so I guess I have to here. I had a few minor things, but there were a few of the strategies that I kind of questioned why they were put where they were. I have to acknowledge that I wasn't part of the work that put this together. I felt a little reticent because I didn't want to rehash all the discussion and contemplation that went into preparing this.

There were a couple strategies that I thought might be placed under different goals. Starting with Goal 5, Strategy 6, which is continue to develop and maintain a transparent and comprehensive system of annual performance plans and evaluations to positively reward staff and recognize accomplishments; I kind of felt that it seemed to me that might be more appropriate under develop and engage in active executive leadership and collaborative involvement. It is the leadership part of Goal 4 that made me think that Strategy 6 under Goal 4 should be there rather than monitor and improve the usefulness of products and services of the ACCSP.

There was Goal 3 under Strategy 6, which is enhance the capabilities of the SAFIS system, including improved user interface and advisory services, seek customer feedback and make the user interface improvements as requested. I was wondering if that might be more appropriate under Goal 5, particularly the portions of that relating to enhancing the capabilities of the interface. Tom did a pretty good job at the executive committee meeting explaining what their thought process was in putting those where they are. I think it would be good for the council to hear those as well.

MR. HOOPEES: We felt that some of the strategies or some of the recommendations from the Independent Program Review fit in more than one of these goals or answering more than one of these goals. You will see in some places some overlap. For instance, this outreach piece or maintaining SAFIS and enhancing the capabilities of SAFIS had an outreach component as well as the software development component; and that is why you see that in two different goals.

MR. ALEXANDER: That is pretty much all I had, Cheri.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: If you can get those comments to me directly by e-mail, we can get those incorporated. Okay, I would like to move on to having Bob Beal. I'm going to put Bob on the spot here to recount his suggestions of changes to the strategic plan.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT E. BEAL: I'm glad I wrote these down and I didn't just wing it. I think I made three or four points during the executive committee meeting. On Page 2, Item E, the driving forces and critical success factors, the first three read as driving forces and the fourth seems to be a critical success factor.

Creating bridges between various constituencies, to me this seems sort of beyond the scope of ACCSP. I don't think ACCSP is designed to make or to facilitate commercial and recreational guys getting along better or environmental folks and fishermen getting along together. I think really the role of ACCSP; I would suggest changing that to "building stakeholder confidence in accuracy and completeness of data".

It is critical for the success of ACCSP that the stakeholders get more confidence in the data. On Page 3 there is a long description of what Driving Force Number 4 is all about. I think some of the wording under that would probably need to be changed a little bit but not a lot. It is almost written with the goal in mind of fostering that confidence in the data. That is one of the items I had.

Just a numbering issue on the top of Page 5, the strategies under Goal Number 2, there is no Strategy Number 5, but I think that is a pretty easy fix. Under Goal Number 4, Strategy Number 1, which is near the top of Page 6, this strategy notes improve upon critical leadership and engagement of the Coordinating Council members – in other words, this group, all of us – and one of the items there is "increase staff oversight".

To me that reads sort of that this group would provide oversight to all of the staff at ACCSP, and I don't think this committee needs to engage in day-to-day operations of individual staff members at the ACCSP. I think it is more the notion was there was to provide additional leadership to the Director of ACCSP and just make sure that they're engaged with the priorities and activities that Mike is engaged with. I'm not sure I have suggested wording there, but that is

something to clarify to maybe increase engagement with the Program Director, something along those lines.

Then on top of Page 7, Strategy Number 1 for Goal 6, this strategy currently reads “Ensure that stakeholders will be able to articulate the value of ACCSP. It seemed to me really to ensure that the partners are able to articulate the value of ACCSP. I think the 23 partners sitting around this table are the ones that need to make sure they know the value of ACCSP and are able to articulate that and describe the program and its value as it moves forward rather than individual stakeholders, fishermen, data users, whatever it might be. I think it is the partners.

My final one was also on Page 7, under the heading of Operations Planning Process, near the bottom of the page, the second sentence reads, “Operation Plan will be developed annually based on current priorities and progression of committee, staff and partner work.” I would just add at the end of that “as resources allow” or “considering resources available”; something to keep in mind that we can’t just do everything we want to do. We’ve got to articulate the resources that are available. That’s all I had, Cheri. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Thank you, Bob. The last person that provided comment is Gordon.

MR. GORDON COLVIN: We note that, as Tom pointed out, a substantial part of particularly the new or updated content of the proposed strategic plan relates to implementation of key recommendations from the Independent Program Review (IPR). In that vein, during the Operations Committee’s last meeting, the recommendation was made to put or to kind of isolate program financing as a goal and strategy.

I think that we’re very supportive of that recommendation. It came late in the process and a lot of folks didn’t have a look at all of that until even after the Operations Committee meeting when some folks put it together. Having now done so and looking hard at how those strategies compare to the recommendations in the IPR, we’d like to suggest two changes to the goals in that section.

One would be to add a new Goal Number 7 that addresses the IPR’s recommendation to reinstitute or to maybe not reinstitute but kind of recharge or recommit or rededicate a Program Financing Committee. I think they called it a Legislative Committee, but it was a Program Financing Committee at one time.

The suggestion there is to add this strategy: Establish an ACCSP committee charged with developing strategies and executing actions targeted at successfully seeking funding for ACCSP from all sources, including partner agency budgets and non-traditional sources. Mike has this so it is something that the staff has accessible.

The second was to make a modification to Goal Number 6 to perhaps more clearly and specifically address the IPR recommendation for the need for state partners to get their executive branches and their state budgeting people briefed on the importance of maintaining even the funding for maintenance.

We recommend modifying that goal to read, “Collaborate with program partners in their funding processes by providing outreach materials and other support to demonstrate the value of ACCSP products and the importance of maintaining base support for fishery-dependent data collection programs to state partners and their executive and legislative branches as well as to all other partner agencies.”

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Thank you, Gordon. Those were the changes that the EC had recommended to the strategic plan. Are there any others? Do people need more time to look at it? Okay, Gordon, if you could send those changes, also. Mike already has them; thank you. With those changes, we are looking at approving the strategic plan. Would someone like to make a motion? Louis.

DR. LOUIS B. DANIEL, III: So moved.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Second; Paul Diodati. **The motion will be to accept the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan as modified.** All in favor; any nays. Okay, 20 approved. Okay, we’d like to move on to the recommendations from the Operations Committee on the Review of the State Conduct of MRIP. Mike Cahall will be presenting.

MR. CAHALL: As I alluded to a little bit earlier, the Recreational Technical Committee has been diligently working away on a state conduct transition plan for the MRIP Intercept Survey. At the last Coordinating Council Meeting, you gave guidance to work through a hybrid option where the data processing and administration would be handled by the Commission and the ACCSP, and that the intercepts would be managed by the States one way or the other.

What you have in front of you is basically an executive summary of the transition plan, which boils down to there is a need for the States to continue to develop their individual state transition plans. Some States have indicated that they very much want to hire their own folks. Others are looking potentially to having support through folks that are hired by the Commission.

Others are actually at potentially getting together, specifically Maryland and Virginia, and conducting that survey together. We don’t have individual State plans yet, but we are working on it. What we are also looking at is a tentative implementation date of January 1, 2016, which should give us plenty of time to work out these individual state plans as well as the Cooperative Agreement that will have to happen between the Atlantic States Commission and NMFS (NOAA Fisheries) in order to both facilitate getting the money moved and committing folks to taking care of business.

Basically, you’re looking at our proposed timeline. Between now and May of this year, we’re going to be looking at the individual State implementation plans; and we’re also going to have to have some kind of contingency planning in the event one or two are unable to fulfill some of the things that they’d like to be able to do; and in addition begin to develop the Cooperative Agreement Statement of Work between the Commission and NMFS as well as potentially the contract language that would be used between the Commission and the states, because essentially the states would be subcontractors to the Commission.

Then we’re looking towards the summer to do the individual state budgets and implementation plans so we can get them completed and get all of the finishing work done on the NOAA

Fisheries Statement of Work and the budget. We expect that to take several months. We have allowed five months in order to get that completed.

Finally, we are looking towards the fall of 2014 to finalize the Cooperative Agreement between NOAA Fisheries and the Commission, along with the Statement of Work. Then at the first quarter of 2015 we're looking to basically finalize all of the paperwork; all of the State's budgets, the Cooperative Agreement, whatever management structure will be put in place to handle the data and the administrative overhead required to execute the survey.

This also most likely represents the drop-dead date for falling back to the status quo. Approval of this package does not necessarily commit the Program to do this; but if for some reason it becomes untenable to move forward with this, we have to allow enough time for NOAA Fisheries to be able to renew the contractor and go ahead and move forward with the status quo for a following year.

It is likely it would be sometimes towards the end of the first quarter of 2015 that sort of final decision, final-final decision has to be made. Then, obviously, the rest of 2015 we will be doing the transition preparation. Most likely we will be bringing staff on board with ACCSP and also in the states to begin to manage that; and then finally our go-live date of January 1, 2016.

I have emphasize there is a lot of work left to do. We've already had a lot of work on the part of most of the state partners who are looking at participating in this. We do have some plans and some budgets from some of the states; and honestly, as I'm sure you're aware, some states are already conducting the survey, in which case it is relatively easy because the checks will stop coming from NOAA Fisheries and start coming from the Commission and other states.

There is going to be a more complex operation in terms of personnel and getting their staffing done. We expect that there are going to potentially be issues amongst some of those states in making that happen. Obviously, there will be contingency planning especially in states where it may take more than the amount of time that we have to get these positions created and approved.

There may be interim plans put in place for the Commission to hire personnel to have boots on the ground in those states to conduct the work. It is going to be almost a state-by-state solution, depending on what goes on in which states. That in a nutshell is it. What we're looking for is approval of this transition plan with an understanding that if something really bad goes wrong, we can still get out if we need to.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Are there any questions for Mike or Tom or Geoff? Geoff has been very involved in this throughout the process. Would somebody like to make a motion to move this forward as a transition plan? Here are two recommendations up on the board. **The first motion states we confirm selection of preferred administration option, which is on Page 4. Is there a second to the motion; Steve. I made the motion.**

Okay, all those in favor. I was going to go one at a time. Do we want to do both at the same time? Okay, we will do a motion. Does anybody else want to make the motion that includes both? Go ahead, Paul.

MR. DIODATI: So moved.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: So the motion is those two points that you see up there. Do we have a question? Yes, Louis.

DR. DANIEL: You all have done a really good job putting all this stuff together. One of the difficulties I'm seeing around the table is the folks that aren't involved with the Executive Committee. I'm not totally clear on where we're going, and I think that is expressed by the lack of conversation around the table.

I guess from my perspective, I'm looking at two things for ACCSP. One is getting it under ASMFC; and, two, making sure that we make good, substantial, measurable progress towards all the states having good catch data; bottom line. All the other projects, all the other continuation projects, all the things that we're doing that are maintaining existing programs that aren't leading us towards having good catch-and-effort information is secondary, from my perspective.

I look at the situations that we've come up with in menhaden and landings and, well, I didn't know I had this many landings; and if we don't know our landings' data, we're in a scrape. I don't know how you can have an Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program and not know what we're landing. I'm comfortable with the recommendations as long as it is leading us in that direction. Those would be my comments.

MR. CAHALL: I certainly appreciate that and certainly the amount of work that has been put into it is substantial. I think that what has been shown to happen is that when the state-conduct occurs, the data are better, they're more timely and they're more accurate. The numbers have proven that out in the Gulf, which has adopted essentially the same process that we're looking at.

Even on the Pacific Coast, which has adopted separate programs that are administered by each individual state as opposed to having a single coastal solution, the states themselves are very happy with it. I believe the quality of the data that is being collected and its timeliness has improved.

I certainly understand a certain level of frustration especially with some key species and especially in the recreational sector where there are issues with the timeliness and the accuracy of the data. We are working actually on a couple of different projects to help with that. I think there is no question – and the experience in the Gulf bears it out – that state conduct of this survey results in better data.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEAL: Louis, I don't know if this will make you feel better or worse, but I will give it a shot. I think the way I view this transition plan and the vote in favor of this motion is really giving the green light to the various committees and the ACCSP/ASMFC structure to move forward, have the states fully flesh out their proposals and their budgets on what they would need, have ACCSP and ASMFC do the same and make some budget estimates on the number of employees that would need to be hired through ACCSP or ASMFC to administer the program, do the grants to the states, do work on the Cooperative Agreement with the NOAA Fisheries Service.

There are a lot of pieces here and I think this gives the green light to doing all those pieces and then pulling all that into one document and see if it adds up; you know, is there enough money

available to do what the states would like to do and maintain at a minimum the current level of sampling and see what that costs. If the budget makes sense and the states, working with the Commission and ACCSP, are able to implement this, then I think there is the final decision by this board that it is the right thing to do and then it goes forward from there.

DR. DANIEL: Just to follow up, it makes me feel fabulous, first off. Secondly, though, when you say ASMFC and ACCSP, isn't it going to be one and the same?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEAL: That's a loaded question! I think that needs to be determined. Mike Cahall and I had the conversation one day, and the way my brain is starting to wrap around this is there is clearly ASMFC stuff, which is the administration of money movement and contracts and grants.

Then there are clearly some tasks that are ACCSP staff, which is moving data back and forth from the NOAA Fisheries Service. I think there are a lot of things in the middle that these various committees need to decide who is going to do that work, hiring the people, and coordinating their activities and everything else. I think to get at your question; there is a lot of detail that still needs to be worked out to decide which entity is going to do exactly which part of this.

MR. ALEXANDER: Thanks for your explanation there, Bob. It helps me to understand that we're committing to developing a plan here. We're not necessarily committing ourselves to do Option 4; is that correct?

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEAL: I'll try again. The way I see it, anyway, it is correct. I don't want to speak for the group.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Do we want to change the motion? Is everybody comfortable with the motion? Paul.

MR. DIODATI: I'm comfortable with right now we're building the concept; so this is the transition plan; and there will still be time to bail out if you see something that you don't like. But, clearly the way to improve some of the problems we've become painfully aware of in MRIP and data collection in general is to take some ownership, and this is an opportunity I think. Right now it is a hybrid model, which is what, Bob, I think you were explaining. It is a hybrid of the ACCSP Program and the Commission, but that might morph as we go forward with this plan, who knows, but I like it the way it is.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Are there any other comments or questions? **The motion is to accept recommendations for MRIP/APAIS state conduct as presented by the Operations Committee. The motion was presented by Paul Diodati and seconded by Louis Daniel.** All in favor, 19 for; anybody against, zero against. Okay, the motion passes. Now we will have Mike present an update on the funding of the Fiscal Year 2014 Approved Projects.

MR. CAHALL: The news this year is actually pretty good although we don't have final numbers yet. As you'll recall, at the last Coordinating Council meeting we approved almost all

of the maintenance projects. Unfortunately, New York fell underneath that line. Then there was money for almost all of the new projects as well.

There was an order that was reversed around that was requested by Dr. Daniel. Where we sit right now is that our total request and taking all of the projects into account and by the time we figured in the administrative fees is \$3.351, which is a little teeny bit above what our current base is. We do not know yet exactly how much money we're going to have. I can tell you however, that the funding for the FIN Line, the Fisheries Information Network line, is actually only slightly below what it had been in previous years.

I'm talking about non-sequester years at this point; so we are hopeful of close to \$2 million from there. The number that I've been given right at this point is \$1.838 million. We do not yet know what the ACFCMA share is going to be because ACFCMA is a little bit in flux. ACFCMA in fact got a plus-up; and so once we have that line, we'll be able to tell you exactly what did and didn't get funded.

I'm very hopeful that we're going to be able to fund the vast majority of our projects; and in fact we may even be able to fund the New York Project. You will be updated as a committee as soon as I have the final numbers, which I expect to see within the next week or ten days.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Are there any questions for Mike? Bob.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEAL: Just a clarification; ACFCMA didn't necessarily receive a plus-up yet. The Council and Commission line in the federal budget is up \$445,000. It hasn't been determined how that money is going to be allocated between the eight regional Councils and the Commissions, plural Commissions. Hopefully, we'll get some of that money, which will equate to a plus-up, and then a decision will have to be made on what to do with that money.

CHAIRMAN PATTERSON: Thank you for the clarification, Bob. Is there any other business anybody would like to bring up? Then I think we're adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 o'clock p.m., February 4, 2014.)

- - -



2014-2018 Strategic Plan

Philosophy

Vision: To be the principal source of fisheries-dependent information on the Atlantic coast through the cooperation of all program partners.

Mission: Produce dependable and timely marine fishery statistics for Atlantic coast fisheries that are collected, processed and disseminated according to common standards agreed upon by all program partners.

Values:

- Accurate data are required for good fisheries management decisions.
- Coordination and collaboration amongst the program partners are essential for success.
- The Program must be responsive to the changing needs for fisheries data.
- Processes must be open and transparent but confidential data must be protected.
- Data shall be accessible and easy to use.
- Responsibilities should be matched with available resources.

I. Introduction

A. Statement of Purpose

This document presents the strategic plan for the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) for the years 2014-2018. The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to guide continued implementation and further development of the Program. The plan:

- Reaffirms the Program's vision "To be the principal source of fisheries-dependent information on the Atlantic coast through the cooperation of all program partners"
- Presents the collective partners' initiatives for the next five years; and
- Sets key program goals and describes strategies to accomplish them.

B. Overview

The ACCSP includes the 15 Atlantic coast states and the District of Columbia, two federal fisheries agencies (NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), three regional fisheries management councils (New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic), the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). The Partner agencies are listed on page 7.

The Program was established in 1995 to address deficiencies in the data available for fisheries management along the Atlantic coast. These included incompatibilities between state and federal data systems, a lack of standardized trip-level catch and effort reporting by partner agencies, lack of universal

permit and vessel registration data, and a general need for more and better data to support new requirements in fisheries management.

The ACCSP is managed collaboratively by committee. The Coordinating Council, composed of high level fisheries policy makers, is the governing body. The Operations Committee provides guidance in setting standards and funding priorities. An Advisory Committee provides industry input to the Program. Technical committees specializing in commercial and recreational fisheries data, biological sampling and bycatch, and information systems create and guide development of all major Program products.

The 2014-2018 Strategic Plan builds on basic principles related to the goals stated in the ACCSP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the 2012 Independent Program Review Report:

- Continued development and implementation of data collection standards and processes will be done cooperatively across jurisdictional lines and ideally maintained through contributions from all program partners;
- These data will be loaded and maintained in a central data repository and provided through a user-friendly system;
- Program planning will be done collaboratively by consensus through committee;
- The Program will focus on activities that yield maximum benefits by being responsive and accountable to partner and end-user needs based on available resources.

By establishing and maintaining data collection standards and providing a data management system that incorporates state and federal data, ACCSP ensures that the best available statistics can be used for fisheries management.

C. Significant Accomplishments

Since its inception, the ACCSP has helped foster an improved atmosphere of cooperation among its partners. The Program has succeeded in establishing coast-wide fisheries data standards that all program partners have agreed to adopt. All 23 partners remain engaged in the process, and the program has made substantial progress towards its goals.

Funded at approximately \$3.5M per year, the ACCSP has established a cooperative project system that allows program partners a great deal of flexibility in working towards ACCSP goals. Approximately \$2M is distributed among 10 to 15 partner projects each year. The remaining \$1.5M is used to operate the program itself.

Commercial data collection (landings or catch/effort) by state and federal program partners now largely meet the ACCSP trip level standards. These data are loaded as a matter of routine into the ACCSP data warehouse and made available to data users.

Recreational catch and effort estimates are also loaded into the Data Warehouse routinely. The ACCSP has also created unique data analysis tools for recreational and for-hire data.

Major milestones since program inception are summarized in Appendix 1.

D. Program Priorities

Early in the Program, the ACCSP divided fisheries-dependent data into four major areas, and determined overall program priorities based on these areas. Recognizing that the collection and dissemination of metadata is an essential component of each program priority, the priorities are, in order of importance:

1. Catch, effort, and landings (including licensing, permit and vessel registration data)
2. Biological data
3. Releases, discards, and protected species data
4. Fisheries economic and social data.

Because of the maturity of area 1, the Program will emphasize improvements in areas 2, 3, and 4. The funding priorities for 2014-2018 will be determined through annual operating plans and RFPs.

E. Driving Forces/Critical Success Factors

The Program and its actions are influenced by a multitude of factors. These factors are constantly evolving and will most likely change over the time period of this Strategic Plan. However, the most pressing factors affecting the Program today are as follows:

1. An increased demand to maintain status quo while producing more results with stagnant and/or declining budgets,
2. An escalating need for more timely, accurate, and finer resolution data to support fisheries management
3. The challenge to maintain a balance between confidentiality and needs of the fisheries management approaches, and
4. Creating bridges between various constituencies.

This Strategic Plan, through its goals and broad strategies, will seek to address each of these issues over the next five years.

Below is a description of the pressing driving forces/critical success factors expected to influence operations during the planning period:

1. An increased demand to maintain status quo while producing more results with stagnant and/or declining budgets

Maintaining the existing data collection systems (i.e., status quo) and developing new initiatives is challenging while constrained by limited funding. While the program partners recognize the importance of adequate funding for fisheries statistics, ACCSP will continue to compete with other initiatives. Additional funding and human resources will have to be allocated to both the ACCSP and its program partners for the full implementation of the Program. Also, performance-based management requires processes to develop performance goals and use them as a basis for budgets. For programs like ACCSP (i.e., intergovernmental programs), developing and measuring quantifiable results may be difficult and time-consuming because tangible benefits are not always realized immediately.

2. An escalating need for more timely, accurate, and finer resolution data to support fisheries management

Current fisheries management is challenging due to the delicate balance between resource conservation and resource use. There is a constant demand for not only new and different kinds of data, but also more accurate, timely, and comprehensive information, including that from environmental and conservation groups.

Other developments that are likely to affect the ACCSP during the planning period include:

- Continued implementation of MRIP on the Atlantic coast, and
- Creating separate management categories for "for-hire" fisheries and multi-species fisheries.

3. The challenge to maintain a balance between confidentiality and the needs of fisheries management

ACCSP, as well as the entire fisheries management sector, needs to progress as technology evolves. Creating and maintaining systems for electronic reporting, high-speed processing, and warehousing data will give ACCSP the means to improve timeliness, accuracy and efficiency.

Along with data dissemination comes the responsibility of protecting confidentiality. Additionally, new electronic systems will require strong security. The Program strives to achieve the right balance between confidentiality, security and availability. Such concerns will increase as the Program expands. Overall, this balanced approach will provide a better basis for fisheries management decisions.

4. Creating bridges between various constituencies

The fishing industry (both commercial and recreational) has historically felt that regulatory actions are not necessary because of the perception that collected data are inaccurate.

The Program includes industry representatives on its Advisory Committee, Outreach Groups, and has also provided a public access query to the Data Warehouse.

Stronger relationships have been developed instilling greater confidence in the Program and the quality of the data, yet there is still room for improvement.

II. Goals and Strategies

The ACCSP will pursue seven goals during the five-year planning period, from 2014 through 2018, to ensure user needs are met.

These goals are:

1. Manage and expand a fully integrated data set that represents the best available fisheries data;
2. Continue working with the program partners to improve fisheries data collection and management in accordance with the evolving ACCSP standards within the confines of limited funds;
3. Explore the allocation of existing Program funds and work with partners to pursue additional funding;
4. Effect stronger executive leadership and collaborative involvement among partners at all committee levels;
5. Monitor and improve the usefulness of products and services provided by the ACCSP;
6. Improve outreach and education, as well as maintain support from all stakeholders and constituents; and
7. Support nationwide systems as defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

Each goal is described in further detail below. Strategies for achieving these goals follow the descriptions.

Goal 1: *Manage and expand a fully integrated data set that represents the best available fisheries data.*

Ready access to accurate, complete data is a critical requirement of fisheries data users. Achieving this goal will provide tangible benefits to all users of fisheries data by reducing the resources required to obtain, format, and compile disparate data sources.

The ACCSP accomplishes this by providing a unified dataset that combines disparate partner data into a standardized Data Warehouse, representing the best available data, presented in an appropriate format for the purpose. The ACCSP will work with each partner to incorporate the best available data into the Data Warehouse.

Strategies:

1. Identify what the Data Warehouse system architecture should look like in relationship to other large partner repositories, such as the [NOAA Annual Commercial Landing Statistics tool](#), and avoid redundancy. Develop a process for synchronization of data between ACCSP and its partners in priority of need.
2. Focus resources on improving the user interface of the Data Warehouse through user feedback and user-centered design. Enhance features of the Data Warehouse to be more accessible to non-technical users.
3. Maintain quality assurances/quality control standards. Provide clear guidance on Data Warehouse updates.
4. Continue to build project and database management expertise among ACCSP staff and leverage the latest technologies available.
5. Identify and address disparate datasets and incorporate them as resources allow.

Goal 2: *Work with program partners to improve fisheries data collection and management in accordance with the evolving Atlantic coast fisheries data standards.*

The partners recognize that improving fisheries statistics starts with the information gathered in the field. The Program aims to implement the data standards in data collection programs, and ensure program

partners maintain existing standards for trip level fisheries data. The standards will be maintained through the collaborative action of the committees.

The expansion of electronic reporting, and the continued development of trip level reporting systems in some partner agencies, will result in substantial data improvements. The continued development of data collection programs will follow the ACCSP priorities. Achieving this goal is the first step to accurate, timely and reliable fisheries statistics.

Strategies:

1. Utilize the committee process to promote full implementation of the data standards by assisting partners with outstanding gaps; demonstrate the successful achievement of standards among program partners.
2. Periodically review the data standards to ensure they are still pertinent, address the needs of program partners, and move the program toward full implementation.
3. Provide targeted information to partners describing the types of data and services available in SAFIS; elucidate how current and changing funding levels will affect the quality and utility of information in SAFIS; seek SAFIS customer feedback and make user interface improvements as requested.
4. Provide partner input to proposed annual objectives, milestones, and budgets, as well as conduct annual reviews of actual accomplishments.
5. Develop processes to address budget shortfalls (both anticipated and unanticipated) as well as adapt Program activities, workloads, and project funding decisions.
6. For unique partner projects, estimate project resource needs prior to project initiation: utilize Program committees to assist staff in balancing workloads, given the resources currently available; track individual projects and tasks in order to better account for true project costs; summarize costs and provide to funding sources when seeking additional resources.

Goal 3: *Explore the allocation of existing Program funds and work with partners to pursue additional funding.*

As the Program has evolved, some partner agencies have become dependent on ACCSP funding to conduct basic fisheries data collection. This is not consistent with the original intent of the Program and limits its ability to move forward with new initiatives. Current policies for distributing and utilizing funds will be reviewed with an eye towards maximizing benefits to the Program as a whole.

Partner agencies' fisheries data programs are inadequately funded in general. ACCSP will work with its partners to help improve funding overall.

Strategies:

1. Define the Program's critical functions vs. non-critical initiatives and focus resources on critical functions. Partners should provide resources to the Program for tasks deemed to be non-critical initiatives.
2. Evaluate funding priorities and determine if a significant change is necessary to better balance innovation and maintenance projects consistent with the original intent of the Program.
3. Develop incentives to leverage alternative funding (state, federal, and private) for partner projects currently reliant on ACCSP funding.
4. Improve and increase promotion of the Program's accomplishments and emphasize those accomplishments during funding processes.
5. Maintain a strong working relationship with the ASMFC Executive Director and NOAA Fisheries in order to provide input into funding processes, such as the MSA reauthorization.
6. Collaborate with Program Partners in their funding processes by providing outreach materials and other support to demonstrate the value of ACCSP products and the importance of maintaining base support for fishery dependent data collection programs to State Partner and their Executive and Legislative branches, as well as to all other Partner agencies.

7. Establish an ACCSP Committee charged with developing strategies and executing actions targeted at successfully seeking funding for ACCSP from all sources, including partner agency budgets and non-traditional sourced.

Goal 4: *Maintain engaged and active executive leadership and collaborative involvement among partners at all committee levels.*

This goal aims to strengthen relationships by engaging partners as active participants, and improving infrastructure for information exchange and communication. Program partner understanding and involvement in ACCSP activities is crucial to the success of the Program. Not only is partner expertise and endorsement key to the development of data collection standards, activities taken on by the Program are meant to meet program partner needs. Their participation requires cooperation and collaboration across the numerous state and federal fisheries agencies operating on the Atlantic coast.

The ACCSP has always been managed by collaborative committees. These committees have been very successful in fostering the cooperative environment essential to the success of the Program.

Strategies:

1. Maintain and improve upon critical leadership and engagement of the Coordinating Council members, including strengthened Council subcommittees relative to funding, increased staff oversight, and clearly defined Council Chair and Vice-Chair roles and responsibilities.
2. Conduct a governance review to determine the best organizational structure and program management for the ACCSP; evaluate potential administrative and programmatic efficiencies that could be gained if ACCSP were a program under ASMFC.
3. Maintain the committee process, balancing efficient use of time and resources between in-person and webinar meetings, given current program funding levels.
4. Clearly articulate expectations, requirements and processes between partners and the ACCSP (e.g., between ACCSP and NOAA Fisheries Science Centers).
5. Support program partners relative to legislative and executive processes necessary for improved data collection.
6. Continue to develop and maintain a transparent and comprehensive system of annual performance plans and evaluations to positively reward staff and recognize accomplishments.

Goal 5: *Monitor and improve the usefulness of products and services provided by the ACCSP.*

The ACCSP recognizes success will be measured by the user experience both in entering and in utilizing ACCSP data in fisheries management decisions. The Program strives to be the principal data source for fisheries scientists and managers.

Fisheries management agencies need the ability to access fisheries statistics quickly and easily. The ACCSP will respond to user needs by providing flexible tools to accurately represent and disseminate available data. Achieving this goal will improve awareness and acceptance of the ACCSP and improve our utility to all users.

Strategies:

1. Adopt an internal strategic planning and execution process. Use quality program, project and business management best practices in order to focus more on the Program's mission and business practices.
2. Employ methods and best practices to ensure that all Program system software and application products adhere to a standardized system or application development lifecycle.
3. Adopt an improved, centralized "trouble" ticket and enhancement request management system, specifically including response from staff on expected timeline until completion.
4. Employ methods and best practices to ensure continuity of institutional knowledge in the case of staff turnover.

5. Ensure that ACCSP data management practices adhere to applicable and compulsory NOAA Fisheries procedural directives and Information Quality Act requirements to provide metadata and data management plans.
6. Enhance the capabilities of the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) (e.g., improved user interface, advisory services); seek SAFIS customer feedback and make user interface improvements as requested.

Goal 6: *Improve outreach and education and increase support from all stakeholders and constituents.*

The ACCSP aims to foster active support and participation of program stakeholders and constituents. Groups targeted are those that have the greatest interest in fisheries data: fisheries managers, stock assessment scientists, social and economic scientists, commercial and recreational fishermen, non-governmental organizations, legislators, and media.

In addition to information sharing among constituents, ACCSP strives to strengthen relationships by engaging partners as active participants. Many ACCSP outreach activities will be coordinated through federal, regional, and state fisheries agencies.

Strategies:

1. Ensure that stakeholders will be able to articulate the value of ACCSP.
2. Enhance the capabilities of the Data Warehouse through an improved user interface and advisory services and by better communicating the data consolidation process.
3. Continue and improve upon the collection and management of input on the value of products and services.
4. Enhance participation in the ACCSP outreach activities, especially at leadership levels.

Goal 7: *Support nationwide systems as defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.*

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act designates the ACCSP as the Atlantic coast anchor of the national Fisheries Information System (FIS). The ACCSP has been an active participant in the FIS since its inception, providing regional input in the creation of the program and providing assistance in crafting the program structures and processes. FIS is analogous in many ways to the ACCSP in terms of the standardization of processes and data. ACCSP has been able to share much of its experience with the FIS. Regional collaboration has been the backbone of the ACCSP since its inception, especially with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Fisheries Information Network (Gulf FIN).

ACCSP continues to participate in MRIP as it develops and implements new methods for recreational and for-hire data collection and estimation. Participation by partner and program staff benefits the cooperative development of new MRIP initiatives in conjunction with ACCSP. The ACCSP will meet its responsibilities to the FIS, continue active collaboration with Gulf FIN, and participate in MRIP.

Strategies:

1. Support and participate in the FIS process by remaining an active participant in its technical and management committees, providing data to FIS and sharing lessons learned from the evolution of the ACCSP. Request funding for research or startup projects where the interests of the ACCSP and FIS coincide.
2. Continue to conduct close collaboration with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission by participating in meetings and continuing technical cooperation to ensure that the ACCSP and Gulf FIN data management systems remain compatible.
3. Support and engage in the MRIP process through continued participation in MRIP technical and management committees. Ensure the ACCSP is able to continue to integrate MRIP data products into the Data Warehouse. Request funding for research or startup projects where the interests of the ACCSP and MRIP coincide.

4. Participate in other national level activities that address fishery statistics.

Operations Planning Process

The ACCSP will use the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan as a guide to direct the activities of staff, committees, and partners for its continued progress. Operations plans will be developed annually based on current priorities and progression of committee, staff and partner work.

Program Partners

NOAA Fisheries

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

New England Fishery Management Council

Potomac River Fisheries Commission

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Maine Department of Marine Resources

New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

District of Columbia Fisheries and Wildlife

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Incorporated for Reference

1. [MOU creating the ACCSP](#)
2. Previous Strategic Plan for the ACCSP: [2008-2012](#)
3. [ACCSP 2008-2012 Outreach Strategic Plan](#)
4. [Atlantic Coast Fisheries Data Collection Standards](#)

Appendix I: Major Milestones of ACCSP

The following is a list of major milestones since 1995.

1995

- Memorandum of Understanding is signed in Charleston, SC by 23 state and federal partner agencies.
- ACCSP established Coordinating Council (policy-level group), Operations Committee (responsible for daily program oversight and management), and Advisory Committee (commercial and recreational industry advisory group).

1996

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided initial staff support for the ACCSP.
- The Advisory Committee and Operations Committee began meeting to discuss program policies.

1997

- The first technical committees began meeting to develop program standards.

1998

- The Coordinating Council approved the first edition of the ACCSP Program Design, including data modules for catch and effort, biological, bycatch, economic and sociological, and metadata.

1999

- First projects funded with \$1.5 million in ACFCMA contributions from partners.
- First permanent ACCSP staff positions are established to coordinate data collection programs, continue evolution of standards, and create and operate the Data Warehouse.

2000

- With seed funding from the ACCSP, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources implemented trip-level reporting for commercial fisheries.

2001

- The Coordinating Council approved standards for biological sampling.
- The ACCSP budget increased to \$3 million after a congressional line item is added for the program.
- The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries established routine feeds of commercial fisheries data to the ACCSP's developing Data Warehouse.
- ACCSP began funding to increase Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) angler intercept and telephone sampling interviews from Maine to Virginia by 50%.

2002

- The ACCSP budget increased to \$3.5M.
- The ACCSP launched its online Data Warehouse
- The Coordinating Council hired an ACCSP Director to manage ongoing development and operation of the Program's standards and responsibilities, as well as day-to-day operations and staff oversight.
- The Coordinating Council approved the 2002-2006 ACCSP Strategic Plan.

2003

- The ACCSP and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management launch SAFIS, a relatively low-cost, real-time web-based data entry system for commercial landings.

- The ACCSP and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources offer SAFIS as a quota monitoring option for striped bass, black sea bass, and horseshoe crab.
- ACCSP eda new For-hire survey as a standard to improve estimates and increase party and charter head boat sampling by 100% from Georgia to Maine. The move was based on results of the ACCSP For-Hire Pilot Study, which identified the most effective methods to collect and verify data from the for-hire fisheries on the Atlantic Coast.

2004

- The Coordinating Council approved the ACCSP Implementation Plan 2004-2008.
- The Coordinating Council approved the second addition of the ACCSP Program Design, which updates Data Collection and Data Management Standards.
- The Virginia Marine Resources Commission established a routine commercial fisheries data feed with the ACCSP's online Data Warehouse.
- NOAA Fisheries made SAFIS available to its nearly 700 permitted seafood dealers in the Northeast.

2005

- SAFIS is deployed by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.
- ACCSP launches a new website to improve navigation and access to important information.
- ACCSP produced the First Ten Years Report in preparation for an External Peer Review.
- Coordinating Council meets to prepare for the External Peer Review.

2006

- Advanced Data Warehouse query system is reworked to improve access to both confidential and non-confidential data and general usability.
- SAFIS is deployed in partner agencies in Maine and New Jersey.
- ACCSP began work to develop an electronic Trip Reporting (eTRIPs) application within SAFIS to collect fishermen trip data.
- An external peer review panel convened to assess the ACCSP structure, including governance, operating environment, mission goals and priorities, and the 2002 – 2007 strategic plan. The panel outlined successes, important lessons learned, and made recommendations for the future.

2007

- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation deploys SAFIS.
- Directed trip and bag limit analysis capabilities are added to the Recreational Queries on the ACCSP Data Warehouse.
- ACCSP provides data to assist in the Southeast Data Assessment Review (SEDAR) of greater amberjack and red snapper stocks.
- ACCSP begins to play a significant role in lobster data gathering and assessments.
- First joint meeting of the Operations and Advisory Committees to review proposals.

2008

- Anglers participating in New Jersey's Volunteer Striped Bass Bonus Fish program are the first recreational anglers able to register and reported their daily landings data online using eTRIPs.
- Massachusetts commercial lobstermen began using eTRIPs.
- ACCSP provided data to ASMFC for the red drum stock assessment, and provides data to assist in the Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR) for king mackerel, and vermillion snapper.
- ACCSP gathered data from its northeast partners and prepares it for submission to the NOAA Fisheries for use in the 2007 publication of Fisheries of the United States (FUS).

2009

- Provided data for over 25 custom data requests.
- ACCSP provided data to assist in the SEDARs for red and black grouper, and Atlantic mackerel. ACCSP provided data to ASMFC for the Atlantic croaker, American eel, and river herring stock assessments.
- ACCSP gathers data from its northeast partners and prepares it for submission to the NOAA Fisheries to use in the 2008 publication of Fisheries of the United States (FUS)
- Releases first annual report and metadata directory to program partners.

2010

- SAFIS redesign deployment launched January 4, 2010.
- Work begins in developing a combined electronic trip and landings reporting (e1-Ticket) application within SAFIS to collect fishermen trip and dealer landings data from the Southeast partners.
- Improvements made in the Data Warehouse on validating and aligning data with the partners, especially with federal partners.
- Workshop held to begin setting standards for recreational data collection along Atlantic coast in conjunction with MRIP.

2011

- Rhode Island and Delaware released electronic logbook application to public.
- e-1Ticket application goes into production.
- Staff provided commercial landings for SEDAR 25 (Black sea bass and golden tilefish), as well as acted as the workgroup rapporteur and data collector.
- Program improved and automated the processes to request and expire access to confidential data.

2012

- Released third edition of program design document, *Atlantic Coast Fisheries Data Collection Standards*.
- Completed the second independent program review process which will guide the next strategic plan.

2013

- Integrated a Highly Migratory Species dealer application for NOAA Fisheries.
- Released survey collecting opinions and attitudes on electronic reporting from Atlantic coast fishermen and dealers.
- Released version of Data Warehouse requiring no login credentials enabling easier access to the data.

Funding Decision Process
Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
May 2014

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (the Program) is a state-federal cooperative initiative to improve recreational and commercial fisheries data collection and data management activities on the Atlantic coast. This formal funding decision process has been developed to assist the Program committees in deliberations on funding of proposals intended to enhance timely implementation of the Program. The following process and proposal formats are provided as guidance to Program Partners.

The Coordinating Council has charged the Operations and Advisory Committees to review proposals and make funding recommendations to the Program Director and the Coordinating Council.

General Process for Setting Annual Program Priorities

The "Atlantic Coast Fisheries Data Collection Standards" provides the basic framework for implementation of the program by all Program Partners. The current Strategic and annual Operations Plans will be used to guide the determination of annual priorities.

Steps in the Funding Decision Process

1. Develop annual funding priorities, criteria and allocation targets (maintenance vs. new projects)
2. Issue Request for Proposals (RFP)
3. Review initial proposals
4. Provide initial results to submitting Partner
5. Review and rank final proposals
6. Proposal approval by the Coordinating Council
7. Notification to submitting Partner of funded projects and notification of approved projects to appropriate grant funding agency (e.g. NOAA Fisheries Regional Grants Program Office, "NOAA Grants") by Partner
8. Operation and/or Executive Committees and Coordinating Council review and make final decision with contingencies (e.g. scope of work, rescissions, no-cost extensions, returned unused funds, etc.)

1. Develop Annual Funding Priorities, Criteria and Allocation Targets (maintenance vs. new projects).

Prior to issuing the Request for Proposals, the Coordinating Council will approve the annual funding criteria and allocation targets. These will later be used to rank projects and allocate funding between maintenance and new projects respectively.

2. Issue Request for Proposals

a. A RFP will be sent to all Program Partners and Committees no later than the week after the spring Coordinating Council meeting. The RFP will include the ranking criteria, allocation targets approved by the Coordinating Council and general Program priorities taken from the current Strategic Plan. The RFP and related documents will also be posted on the Program's website. The public has the ability to work with a Program Partner to develop and submit a proposal. All proposals MUST BE submitted either by a Program Partner, jointly by several Program Partners, or through a Program Committee. Principle investigators are strongly encouraged to work with their Operations Committee member in the development of any proposal.

b. All proposals must be submitted electronically to the Program Director, and/or designee, in the following standard format:

Applicant Name: Identify the name of the applicant organization(s).

Project Title: A brief statement to identify the project.

Project Type: Identify whether new or maintenance project.

- *New Project – Partner project never funded by the Program. New projects may not exceed a duration of two years. Second year funding is not guaranteed, partners must reapply.*
- *Maintenance Project – Project funded by the Program that conducts the same scope of work as a previously funded new or maintenance project. These proposals may not contain significant changes in scope (e.g., the addition of bycatch data collection to a catch/effort dealer reporting project). They must include in the cover letter whether there are any changes in the current proposal from prior years, and if so, provide a brief summary of those changes.*

Requested Award Amount: Provide the total requested amount of proposal. Do not include an estimate of the NOAA grant administration fee.

Requested Award Period: Provide the total time period of the proposed project. The award period typically will be limited to one-year projects.

Objective: Specify succinctly the why, what, and when of the project.

Need: Specify the need for the project and the association to the Program.

Results and Benefits: Identify and document the results or benefits to be expected from the proposed project. Clearly indicate how the proposed work meets various elements outlined in the ACCSP Proposal Ranking Criteria Document (Appendix A). Some potential benefits may include: fundamental in nature to all fisheries; region-wide in scope; answering or addressing region-wide questions or policy issues; required by MSFCMA, ACFCMA, MMPA, ESA, or other acts; transferability; and/or demonstrate a practical application to the Program. Include coordinated method of data transmission to the Program in addition to module data elements gathered.

Approach: List all procedures necessary to attain each project objective. If a project includes work in more than one module, identify approximately what proportion of effort is comprised within each module (e.g., catch and effort 45%, biological 30% and bycatch 25%).

Geographic Location: The location where the project will be administered and where the scope of project will be conducted.

Milestone Schedule: An activity schedule in table format for the duration of the project, starting with Month 1 and ending with a three-month report writing period.

Project Accomplishments Measurement: A table showing the project goals and how progress towards those goals will be measured. In some situations the metrics will be numerical such as numbers of anglers contacted, fish measured, and/or otoliths collected, etc; while in other cases the metrics will be binary such as software tested and software completed.

Cost Summary (Budget): Detail all costs to be incurred in this project in the format outlined in the budget guidance and template at the end of this document. A budget narrative should be included which explains and justifies the expenditures in each category. Provide cost projections for federal and total costs. Provide details on Partner/in-kind contribution (e.g., staff time, facilities, IT support, overhead, etc.). Details should be provided on start-up versus long-term operational costs.

Overhead rates may not exceed 25% of total costs unless mandated by law or policy. Program Partners may not be able to control overhead/indirect amounts charged. However, where there is flexibility, the lowest amount of overhead should be charged. When this is accomplished indicate on the cost summary sheet the difference between the overhead that could have been charged and the actual amount charged, if different. If overhead is charged to the Program, it cannot also be listed as in-kind.

Maintenance Projects: Maintenance proposals must provide project history table, table of total project cost by year, a summary table of metrics and the budget narrative from the most recent year's funded proposal.

Principal Investigator: List the principal investigator(s) and attach curriculum vitae (CV) for each. Limit each CV to two pages. Additional information may be requested.

3. Review initial proposals

Proposals will be reviewed by staff and the Operations and Advisory Committees. Committee members are encouraged to coordinate with their offices and/or constituents to provide input to the review process. Operations Committee members are also encouraged to work with staff in their offices that have submitted a proposal in order to represent the proposal. The review and evaluation of all written proposals will take into consideration the ranking criteria, funding allocation targets and the overall Program Priorities as specified in the RFP. Proposals may be forwarded to relevant Program technical committees for further review of the technical feasibility and statistical validity.

4. Provide initial review results to submitting Partner

Program staff will notify the submitting Partner of suggested changes or request responses to questions arising from the review process. The submitting Partner will be given an opportunity to submit a final proposal incorporating suggested changes in the same format previously described in Step 2(b) by the final RFP deadline.

5. Review and rank final proposals.

The review and ranking of all proposals will take into consideration the ranking criteria, funding allocation targets and overall Program Priorities as specified in the RFP. The Program Director and the Advisory and Operations Committees will develop a list of prioritized recommended proposals and forward for discussion, review, and approval by the Coordinating Council.

6. Proposal approval by the Coordinating Council

The Coordinating Council will review a summary of all submitted proposals and prioritized recommended proposals from the Operations and Advisory Committees. Each representative on the Coordinating Council will have one vote during final prioritization of proposed proposals. Projects to be funded by the Program will be approved by the Coordinating Council by the end of November each year. The Program Director will submit a pre-notification to the appropriate NOAA Grants office of the prioritized proposals to expedite processing when those offices receive partner grant submissions.

7. Notification to submitting Partner of funded projects and submittal of project documents to appropriate grants agency (e.g. NOAA Grants) by Partner.

Notification detailing the Coordinating Council's actions relevant to a Partner's proposal will be sent to each Partner by Program staff.

- Approved projects from non-federal partners must be submitted as full applications (federal forms, project and budget narratives, and other attachments)

to NOAA Grants via www.grants.gov. These documents must reflect changes or conditions approved by the Coordinating Council.

- Non-federal partners must provide the Program Director with an electronic copy of the narrative and either an electronic or hard copy of the budget of the grant application as submitted to the grants agency (e.g. NOAA Grants).
- Federal Partners do not submit applications to NOAA Grants.

8. Operation and/or Executive Committees and Coordinating Council review and final decision with contingencies or emergencies.

Committee(s) review and decision of project changes (e.g. scope of work, rescissions, no-cost extensions, returned unused funds, etc.) during the award period.

Scope of Work Change:

- a) Partners shall submit requests for amendments to approved projects in writing to the Program Director. The Coordinating Council member for that Partner must sign the request.
- b) When Partners request an amendment to an approved project, the Program Director will contact the Chair and Vice Chair of the Operations Committee. The Program Director and Operations Committee Chairs will determine if the requested change is minor or substantial. The Chairs and Program Director may approve minor changes.
- c) For substantial proposed changes, a decision document including the opinions of the Chairs and the Program Director will be sent to the Operations Committee and the Executive Committee of the Coordinating Council for review.
- d) The Executive Committee will decide to approve or reject the request for change and notify the Program Director, who will send a written notification to the Partner's principal investigator with a copy to the Operations Committee.
- e) When a requested major amendment is submitted shortly before a Coordinating Council meeting, the approval of the amendment will be placed on the Council Agenda.
- f) The Program Director will notify NOAA Grants of any change in scope of work for final approval for non-federal proposals, and the Partner will need to request a Change in Scope through Grants Online. Necessary communications will be maintained between the concerned Partner, the Program and NOAA Grants. Any changes must be approved through the normal NOAA Grants process.

Determination of contingencies for funding adjustments (e.g. rescissions):

The Program Director will be notified by NOAA Fisheries of any federal grant reduction. Such reductions may include, but are not limited to:

- Lower than anticipated amounts from any source of funding
- Rescission of funding after initial allocations have been made
- Partial or complete withdrawal of funds from any source

If these or other situations arise, the Operations Committee will notify partners with approved proposals to reduce their requested budgets or to withdraw a proposal entirely. If this does not reduce the overall requested amount sufficiently, the Director, the Operations Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, and the Advisory Committee Chair will develop a final recommendation and forward to the Executive Committee of the Coordinating Council. These options to address funding contingencies may include:

- Eliminating the lowest ranked proposal(s)
- A fixed percentage cut to all proposals/budgets
- A directed reduction in a specific proposal(s)

No-Cost Extensions and Unused/Returned Funds:

If additional time is needed to complete the project, Program Partners can request a no-cost extension to their award period. Partners should let the Program know of the need for an additional time, and then request the extension as an Award Action Request through NOAA Grants Online at least 30 days before the end date of the award.

In an effort to limit the instances in which funds are not completely used during the award period, draw down reports from the NOAA Grants offices indicating remaining grant balances will be periodically reviewed during each fiscal year.

While effort should be made to complete the project as proposed, if Program Partners find that they will not be able to make use of their entire award, they should notify the Program and their NOAA Federal Program Officer as soon as possible. Depending on the timing of the action, the funds may be able to be reused within the Program, or they may have to be returned to the U.S. Treasury.

Program Partners must submit a written document to the Program Director outlining unused project funds potentially being returned. The Partner must also notify their Coordinating Council member (if applicable) for approval to return the unused funds. If the funding is available for re-use within the Program, the Director will confer with the Operations Committee Chair and Vice-Chair and the Advisory Committee Chair, and then submit a written recommendation to the Executive Committee of the Coordinating Council for final approval on the plan to distribute the returned money.

Necessary communications will be maintained between the concerned Partner, the Program, and NOAA Grants office. Any changes must be approved through the normal NOAA Grants process.

Relevant Deadlines

- April
 - Develop annual priorities and funding allocation targets.
- May
 - Distribute request for proposals
- July
 - Proposal submission ○ Proposals received after specified RFP deadline will not be considered for funding.
- July ○ August
 - Initial proposal evaluation - recommendations developed by Program staff, and Advisory and Operations Committees.
- August/September
 - Submission of final proposals ○ final proposals must be submitted electronically to the Program Director, and/or designee by close of business on the day of the specified deadline. Final proposals received after RFP deadline will not be considered for funding.
- September ○ October
 - Final proposal evaluation - recommendations developed by the Program Director, Advisory and Operations Committees.
- Late October/November
 - Coordinating Council approval of project proposals.

Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to assist Partners in preparing proposals:

- The Program is predicated upon the most efficient use of available funds. Many jurisdictions have data collection and data management programs which are administered by other fishery management agencies. Detail coordination efforts your agency/Committee has undertaken to demonstrate cost-efficiency and non-duplication of effort.
- All program Partners conducting projects for implementation of the Program standards in their jurisdictions are required to submit data to the Program in prescribed standards, where the module is developed and formats are available. Detail coordination efforts with Program data management staff with projects of a research and/or pilot study nature to submit project information and data for distribution to all Program Partners and archives.
- If appropriate to your project, please detail your agency's data management capability. Include the level of staff support (if any) required to accomplish the proposed work. If contractor services are required, detail the level and costs.
- Before funding will be considered beyond year two of a project, the Partner agency shall detail in writing how the Partner agency plans to assume partial or complete funding, or if not feasible, explain why.

- If appropriate to your project, detail any planned or ongoing outreach initiatives. Provide scope and level of outreach coordinated with either the Outreach Coordinator and/or Outreach Committee.
- Proposals including collection of aging or other biological samples must clarify partner processing capabilities (i.e., how processed and by whom).
- Provide details on how the proposal will benefit the Program as a whole, outside of benefits to the Partner or Committee.
- Proposals that request funds for Law Enforcement should confirm that all funds will be allocated towards reporting compliance.
- Proposals must detail any in-kind effort/resources, and if no in-kind resources are included, state why.
- Proposals must meet the same quality as would be appropriate for a grant proposal for ACFCMA or other federal grant.
- Assistance is available from Program staff, or an Operations Committee member for proposal preparation and to insure that Program standards are addressed in the body of a given proposal.
- Even though a large portion of available resources may be allocated to one or more jurisdictions, new systems (including prototypes) will be selected to serve all Partners' needs.
- Partners submitting pilot, or other short-term programs, are encouraged to lease large capital budget items (vehicles, etc.) and where possible, hire consultants or contractors rather than hire new permanent personnel.
- The Program will not fund proposals that do not meet Program standards. However, in the absence of approved standards, pilot studies may be funded.
- Proposals will be considered for modules that may be fully developed but have not been through the formal approval process. Pilot proposals will be considered in those cases.
- The Operations Committee may contact Partners concerning discrepancies or inconsistencies in any proposal, and may recommend modifications to proposals subject to acceptance by the submitting Partner and approval by the Coordinating Council. The Operations Committee may recommend changes or conditions to proposals. The Coordinating Council may conditionally approve proposals. These contingencies will be documented and forwarded to the submitting Partner in writing by Program staff.

- Any proposal submitted after the initial RFP deadline will not be considered, in addition to any proposal submitted by a Partner which is not current with all reporting obligations.

Reporting requirements

- a) Program staff will assess project performance.
- b) The Partner project recipients must abide by the NOAA Regional Grant Programs reporting requirements and as listed below. All semi-annual and final reports are to include a table showing progress toward each of the progress goals as defined in Step 2b and additional metrics as appropriate. Also, all Partner project recipients will submit the following reports based on the project start date to the Program Director:
 - a. Semi-annual reports (due 30 days after the semi-annual period) throughout the project period including time periods during no-cost extensions,
 - b. One final report (due 90 days after project completion).
 - c. Federal Partners must submit reports to the Program Director, and State Partners must submit reports to both the Program Director and the appropriate NOAA Grants office.
- c) Program staff will conduct an initial assessment of the final report to ensure the report is complete in terms of reporting requirements. Program staff will serve as technical monitors to review submitted reports. NOAA staff also reviews the reports submitted via Grants Online.
- d) Reports shall be submitted using the following format:
 - a. Semi-Annual(s) ó Progress Reports: (3-4 pages)
 - i. Title page - Project name, project dates (semi-annual period covered and complete project period), submitting Partner, and date.
 - ii. Objective
 - iii. Activities Completed ó bulleted list by objective.
 - iv. Progress or lack of progress of incomplete activities during the period of semi-annual progress ó bulleted list by objective.
 - v. Activities planned during the next reporting period.
 - vi. Metrics table
 - vii. Milestone Chart ó original and revised if changes occurred during project period.
 - b. Final Report:
 - i. Title page ó Project name, project dates, submitting Partner, and date.
 - ii. Abstract/Executive Summary (including key results)
 - iii. Introduction
 - iv. Procedures
 - v. Results:
 1. Description of data collected.
 2. Quality of the data pertaining to the projects objective (e.g. representative to scope of project, quantity collected, etc.).
 3. Compiled data results.

4. Summary of statistics.
- vi. Discussion:
 1. Discuss the interpretation of results of project by addressing questions such as, but not limited to:
 - a. What occurred?
 - b. What did not occur that was expected to occur?
 - c. Why did expected results not occur?
 2. Applicability of study results to Program goals.
 3. Recommendations/Summary/Metrics
 - vii. Summarized budget expenditures and deviations (if any).
- e) A project approved on behalf of a Program Committee will be required to follow the reporting requirements specified above. The principle investigator (if not the Chair of the Committee) will submit the report(s) to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee for review and approval. The Committee Chair is responsible for submitting the required report(s) to the Program.
 - f) Joint projects will assign one principle investigator responsible for submitting the required reports. The principle investigator will be identified within the project proposal. The submitted reports should be a collaborative effort between all partners involved in the joint project.
 - g) Project recipients will provide all reports to the Program in electronic format.
 - h) Partners who receive no-cost extensions must notify the Program Director within 30 days of receiving approval of the extension. Semi-annual and final reports will continue to be required through the extended grant period as previously stated.
 - i) Partners that have not met reporting requirements for past/current projects may not submit a new proposal.
 - j) A verbal presentation of project results may be requested. Partners will be required to submit copies of project specifications and procedures, software development, etc. to assist other Program Partners with implementation of similar programs.

Programmatic review

Project reports will inform Partners of project outcomes. This will allow the Program as a whole to take advantage of lessons learned and difficulties encountered. Staff will provide final reports to the appropriate Committee(s). The Committees then can discuss the report(s) and make recommendations to modify the Data Collection Standards as appropriate. The recommendations will be submitted through the Program committee(s) review process.

BUDGET GUIDELINES & TEMPLATE FOR PROPOSALS

All applications must have a detailed budget narrative explaining and justifying the expenditures by object class. Include in the discussion the requested dollar amounts and how they were derived. A spreadsheet or table detailing expenditures is useful to clarify the costs (see template below). The following are highlights from the NOAA Budget Guidelines document to help Partners formulate their budget narrative. The full Budget Guidelines document is available at: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/StateFedOff/grants.html>

Object Classes:

- a. Personnel: include salary, wage, and hours committed to project for each person by job title. Identify each individual by name and position, if possible.
- b. Fringe Benefits: should be identified for each individual. Describe in detail if the rate is greater than 35 % of the associated salary.
- c. Travel: all travel costs must be listed here. Provide a detailed breakdown of travel costs for trips over \$5,000 or 5 % of award. Include destination, duration, type of transportation, estimated cost, number of travelers, lodging, mileage rate and estimated number of miles, and per diem.
- d. Equipment: equipment is any single piece of non-expendable, tangible personal property that costs \$5,000 or more per unit and has a useful life of more than one year. List each piece of equipment, the unit cost, number of units, and its purpose. Include a lease vs. purchase cost analysis. If there are no lease options available, then state that.
- e. Supplies: purchases less than \$5,000 per item are considered by the federal government as supplies. Include a detailed, itemized explanation for total supplies costs over \$5,000 or 5% of the award.
- f. Contractual: list each contract or subgrant as a separate item. Provide a detailed cost breakdown and describe products/services to be provided by the contractor. Include a sole source justification, if applicable.
- h. Other: list items, cost, and justification for each expense.
- i. Total direct charges
- j. Indirect charges: If claiming indirect costs, please submit a copy of the current approved negotiated indirect cost agreement. If expired and/or under review, a copy of the transmittal letter that accompanied the indirect cost agreement application is requested.
- k. Totals of direct and indirect charges

Example budget table template. Budget narrative should provide further detail on these costs.

Description	Calculation	Cost
Personnel (a)		
Supervisor	Ex: 500 hrs x \$20/hr	\$10,000
Biologist		
Technician		
Fringe (b)		
Supervisor	Ex: 15% of salary	\$1500
Biologist		
Technician		

Travel (c)		
Mileage for sampling trips	Ex: Estimate 2000 miles x \$0.33/mile	\$660
Travel for meeting		
Equipment (d)		
Boat	Ex: \$7000, based on current market research	\$7000
Supplies (e)		
Safety supplies		\$1200
Sampling supplies		\$1000
Laptop computers	2 laptops @\$1500 each	\$3000
Software		\$500
Contractual (f)		
Data Entry Contract	Ex: 1000 hrs x \$20/hr	\$20,000
Other (h)		
Printing and binding		
Postage		
Telecommunications charges		
Internet Access charges		
Totals		
Total Direct Charges (i)		
Indirect Charges (j)		
Total (sum of Direct and Indirect) (k)		

Appendix A: Ranking Criteria Spreadsheet for Maintenance and New Project

Ranking Guide - Maintenance Projects:

Primary Program Priority	Point Range	Description of ranking consideration
Catch and Effort	0-10	Rank based on range within module and level of sampling defined under Program design. When considering biological or bycatch funding rank according to priority matrices.
Biological Sampling	0-8	
Bycatch Species Interactions	0-6	
Social and Economic	0-4	
Metadata	+2	Additional points if metadata collected and supplied to Program defined within the proposal.

Project Quality Factors	Point Range	Description of ranking consideration
Multi-Partner/Regional impact including broad applications.	0-5	Rank based on the number of Partners involved in project OR regional scope of proposal (e.g. geographic range of the stock).
> yr 2 contains funding transition plan and/or justification for continuance	0-4	Rank based on defined funding transition plan away from Program funding or viable justification for continued Program funding.
In-kind contribution	0-4	1=1%-25% 2=26%-50% 3=51%-75% 4=76%-99%
Improvement in data quality/quantity/timeliness	0-4	1=Maintain minimum level of needed data collections. ↓ 4=Improvements in data collection reflecting 100% of related module as defined within the Program design.
Potential secondary module as a by-product (In program priority order)	0-4, 0-3, 0-2, 0-1	Rank based on additional module data collection and level of collection as defined within the Program design of individual module.
Impact on stock assessment	0-3	Rank based on the level of data collection that leads to new or greatly improved stock assessments.

Other Factors	Point Range	Description of ranking consideration
Properly Prepared	0-5	Meets requirements as specified in funding decision document Step2b and Guidelines

Ranking Guide - New Projects:

Program Priority	Point Range	Description of ranking consideration
Catch and Effort	0-10	Rank based on range within module and level of sampling defined under Program design. When considering biological or bycatch funding rank according to priority matrices.
Biological Sampling	0-8	
Bycatch Species Interactions	0-6	
Social and Economic	0-4	
Metadata	+2	Additional points if metadata collected and supplied to Program defined within the proposal.

Project Quality Factors	Point Range	Description of ranking consideration
Multi-Partner/Regional impact including broad applications.	0-5	Rank based on the number of Partners involved in project or regional scope of proposal (e.g. fisheries sampled).
Contains funding transition plan / Defined end-point	0-4	Rank based on quality of funding transition plan or defined end point.
In-kind contribution	0-4	1=1%-25% 2=26%-50% 3=51%-75% 4=76%-99%
Improvement in data quality/quantity/timeliness	0-4	1=Maintain minimum level of needed data collections. ↓ 4=Improvements in data collection reflecting 100% of related module as defined within the Program design.
Potential secondary module as a by-product (In program priority order)	0-4, 0-3, 0-2, 0-1	Rank based on additional module data collection and level of collection as defined within the Program design of individual module.
Impact on stock assessment	0-3	Rank based on the level of data collection that leads to new or greatly improved stock assessments.

Other Factors	Point Range	Description of ranking consideration
Innovative	0-5	Rank based on new technology, methodology, financial savings, etc.
Properly Prepared	0-5	Meets requirements as specified in funding decision document Step2b and Guidelines



Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N | Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0780 | 703.842.0779 (fax) | www.accsp.org

TO: ACCSP Coordinating Council and All ACCSP Committees

FROM: Michael S. Cahall, ACCSP Director 

SUBJECT: ACCSP Request for 2015 Proposals

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (Program or ACCSP) is issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to program partner agencies or Committees for FY15 funding.

The Funding Decision Document provides general guidance and includes information on proposal preparation, the project approval process, and the RFP schedule. Projects in areas not specifically addressed may still be considered for funding if they help achieve Program goals. These goals, listed by priority, are improvements in:

1. Catch, effort, and landings data (including licensing, permit and vessel registration data);
2. Biological data;
3. Releases, discards and protected species data; and
4. Economic and sociological data.

Project activities that will be considered, according to priority, may include:

- Partner implementation of data collection programs;
- Continuation of current program funded Partner programs;
- Funding for personnel required to implement Program related projects/proposals; and
- Data management system upgrades or establishment of Partner data feeds to the Data Warehouse and/or Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System.

Proposals for biological sampling should target priority species in the top quartile (Attachment I) of the Biological Priority Matrix. Proposals for observer coverage should align with fisheries affecting the top quartile priority species (Attachment II) of the Bycatch Priority Matrix. Brief descriptions of current levels of biological or bycatch sampling by any of the Partners would be helpful to the review process.

Submissions must comply with Program Standards found [here](#). Timelines for the 2015 RFP are shown in Attachment III. Please consider using this [successful project proposal](#) as a template.

Proposals to continue Program funded partner programs (“maintenance proposals”) may not contain significant changes in scope (for example the addition of bycatch data collection to a dealer reporting project), and must include in the cover letter whether there are any changes in the current proposal from prior years, and if so, provide a brief summary of those changes.

Project submissions will be reviewed in accordance with the Funding Decision Document, ranking criteria (Attachment IV), and funding allocation. Current funding allocation guidelines are 75% for maintenance projects and 25% for new projects within the Program priorities. Overhead rates may not exceed 25% of total costs unless mandated by law or policy. Items included within overhead should not also be listed as in-kind match. The final decisions on proposals to be funded for FY15 will be made in October 2014. We strongly urge you to **carefully** review the Funding Decision Document, especially in reference to the budget template.

Project awards will be subject to funding availability. If there is a funding shortfall, adjustments may be made to awards in accordance with the Funding Decision Document.

Successful applications will be notified when funding becomes available and project investigators will be required to report progress directly to the Program Operations and Advisory Committees in addition to the standard Federal reporting requirements.

Please submit initial proposals as Microsoft Word and Excel files no later than **June 30, 2014**, by email to **both** Mike Cahall (mike.cahall@accsp.org) and Ann McElhatton (<mailto:ann.mcelhatton@accsp.org>). If you have any

Our vision is to produce dependable and timely marine fishery statistics for Atlantic coast fisheries that are collected, processed, and disseminated according to common standards agreed upon by all program partners.

questions about the funding decision process, please contact your agency's Operations Committee member (<http://www.accsp.org/opercommittee.htm>), Mike Cahall (703-842-0781), or Ann McElhatton (703-842-0780).

RELEVANT ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT I FY 2015 Biological Priority Matrix


ATTACHMENT II FY 2015 Bycatch Priority Matrix

ATTACHMENT III Timeline for Proposal Review

ATTACHMENT IV FY 2015 Ranking Criteria Document

Biological Sampling Priority Matrix

FY 2015



Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

Biological Review Panel recommends:

- Species in the upper 25% of priority matrix be considered for funding.
- Sampling projects which cover multiple species within the upper 25% are highly recommended.

Biological Review Panel recommendations based on matrix*:

* UPPER 25% OF MATRIX

	Fishery	Most	Current/	Council	ASMFC	State	NMFS	Fishery	Sig. change	Sig. change	Adequacy	Stock	# sampling	Seasonality	TOTAL
	Status	Recent	Next	Priority	Priority	Priority	Priority	Managed	in landings	in mgmt	of level of	Resilience	strata	of fishery	
		Stock	Stock						w/in 24 mo	w/in 24 mo	sampling				
	K: known	Assessment	Assessment	0=NA	0=NA	0=NA	0=NA	0 = No	1= <25%	0= None	0=Over-	1 = resilient	1= <20	1= >9 mo	
	U: unkn	(Year)	(Year)	1=low	1=low	1=low	1=low	1 = Yes	3= 25-75%	1=Minor	sampled,	5 = vulnerable	3= 20-75	3= 1-9 mo	
	K/U: partly			5=high	5=high	5=high	5=high		5= >75%	5= Signif	5= none		5= >75	5= <1 mo	
Species	known														
Black Sea Bass (1)															
Centropomus striata	K	2011	2011	5	5	3.5	5.0	1	1	5	1	3	5	1	35.50
Winter Flounder															
Pleuronectes americanus	K	2011	Unknown	5	3	2.4	5.0	1	1	5	2	3	3	1	31.36
Snowy Grouper															
Epinephelus niveatus	K		2013	5	0	1.3	5.0	1	1	3	4	5	3	3	31.29
Shad															
Alosa															
sapidissima/mediocris	U	2007	Unknown	0	5	4.1	0.0	1	1	5	4	5	3	3	31.14
Spiny Dogfish															
Squalus acanthias	K	2009	Unknown	5	4	2.5	3.0	1	1	3	2	5	3	1	30.50
Winter Skate															
Raja ocellata	K	2006	Unknown	4	0	0.8	3.0	1	3	5	4	5	3	1	29.79
Blueline Tilefish															
Caulolatilus microps	U		2013	5	0	1.0	4.0	1	1	4	4	3	3	3	29.00
Scup															
Stenotomus chrysops	K/U	2002	2010?	5	5	2.3	4.0	1	3	0	1	1	5	1	28.29
Gray Triggerfish															
Balistes capricus	K/U		2013	5	0	1.1	4.0	1	5	0	4	2	3	3	28.07
Summer Flounder			Annual												
Paralichthys dentatus	K	2008	Update	5	5	3.6	5.0	1	1	0	1	2	3	1	27.57
Gag Grouper															
Mycteroperca microlepis	K	2006	2013	4	0	1.1	4.0	1	3	2	3	4	3	1	26.14
River Herring															
Alosa	U	1988	2011?	0	5	3.0	0.0	1	1	0	4	4	5	3	26.00
Weakfish															
Cynoscion regalis	U	2009	Unknown	1	5	3.0	0.0	1	3	5	1	3	3	1	26.00
Little Skate															
Raja erinacea	K	2006	Unknown	4	0	0.6	3.0	1	1	5	4	3	3	1	25.64
Yellowtail Flounder															
Pleuronectes ferrugineus	K	2008	2012	4	0	1.4	5.0	1	1	5	2	2	3	1	25.43
Finetooth Shark															
Carcharhinus isodon	K	2007	Unknown	0	1	1.0	5.0	1	3	0	3	5	3	3	25.00
Red Grouper															
Epinephelus morio	K/U	2010	2013	3	0	0.9	4.0	1	1	3	4	4	3	1	24.93
Tilefish (1)															
Lopholatilus															
chamaeleonticeps	K	2005	2013	3	0	1.8	4.0	1	1	0	4	4	3	3	24.79
N. Short-fin Squid															
Illex illecebrosus	K/U	2005	Unknown	2	0	0.7	3.0	1	1	5	2	4	3	3	24.71
American Lobster															
Homarus americanus	K	2009	2014	0	5	2.5	3.0	1	1	1	4	3	3	1	24.50

Bio-sampling Priority Matrix


		Biological Sampling Adequacy	
		Adequate (0 - 2)	Inadequate (3 - 5)
Averaged Priority Columns	High (≥ 3.0)	Black Sea Bass - Winter Flounder - Spiny Dogfish - Scup - Summer Flounder	
	Low (< 3.0)	Weakfish - Yellowtail Flounder - N. Shortfin Squid	Snowy Grouper - Shad - Winter Skate - Blueline Tilefish - Gray Triggerfish - Gag Grouper - River Herring - Little Skate - Finetooth Shark - Red Grouper - Tilefish - American Lobster

Grouping of species in upper 25% of total matrix score, based on sampling adequacy and average priority (average of ASMFC, Council, NMFS and State priorities).

- Weakfish, yellowtail flounder and northern short-fin squid are being sampled adequately and have low priority so additional sampling is not needed.
- Projects that target multiple upper quartile species should also be given a higher priority.

Bycatch Sampling Priority Matrix

FY 2015



Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

Top Quartile of FY 2015 Prioritization Matrix

Fishery	Sig. Change	# trips	% of total	Chg in	Amt of	Prot Sp	Reg Sp	Impact of	Amt of non	Impact of	Adequacy	TOTAL	# Sea Days	
Managed	in mgmt w/in		landings	landings	disc of	Interact	Discards	disc on other	reg disc	Disc on non-	of level of		to adequately	
	past 36 mo				target sp			reg sp		reg sp stock	sampling	75th %	sample	
y=1 n=0	0= none	1 - 1/100	1 = <33%	0 = < 50%	0=none,	0 = none	0=none	0 = none	0=none	0 = none	N=not adeq	50th %	(20-30% CV)	
	3= yes	2, 3, 4, 5	2 = 33-66%	3 = > 50%	1=<5%	3 = low	1= <5%	1=low	1= <5%	1=low	Y=adeq	25th %	or 2% trips	
			3 = >66%		2= 5-20%	6 = med	2= 5-20%	2=med	2= 5-20%	2=med	U=unkn			
					3= >20% or unkn	8= unkn 9= high	3= >20% or unkn	3=high or unkn	3= >20% or unkn	3=high or unkn				
original ACCSP FLEET name	ACCSP Fleet Name													
Gillnet NE Florida - Kingfish ("whiting")	South Atlantic Coastal Gillnet	1	3	3	3	0	3	8	3	3	3	N	33	724
Otter Trawl - Southern shrimp	South Atlantic Shrimp Trawl	1	3	3	3	0	1	9	3	2	3	N	31	280
Lobster Trap - inshore/offshore	New England Lobster Pots	1	3	5	3	0	3	9	2	3	1	N	31	452
Pelagic Longline - large pelagics	Southeastern, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico HMS Pelagic Longline	1	3	3	3	0	3	9	3	3	1	Y	30	77
Otter Trawl - squid, butterfish	Mid-Atlantic Small-Mesh Otter Trawl, Bottom	1	3	3	2	0	1	6	3	3	3	N	28	3,006
Gillnet - NE groundfish	New England Large-Mesh Gillnet	1	3	3	2	0	3	9	3	2	1	N	28	720
Otter Trawl - groundfish	New England Large-Mesh Otter Trawl, Bottom	1	3	4	3	0	3	6	2	3	1	N	27	5,853
Otter Trawl - squid, butterfish	New England Small-Mesh Otter Trawl, Bottom	1	3	3	3	0	3	6	3	3	1	N	27	4,274
Mid-Atlantic Inland Gillnets (small mesh <5") inland (bays, sounds and estuaries from NY - NC) - Weakfish, bluefish, spot, croaker, river herring, spotted sea trout, sea mullet (kingfish)	Mid-Atlantic Inland Gillnets (bays, sounds and estuaries from NY - NC)	1	0	3	1	3	3	6	3	3	2	N	26	144
Skimmer Trawl - Southern Shrimp	South Atlantic Skimmer Trawls	1	0	3	1	0	1	9	3	2	3	N	25	23
Bandit H&L - snapper/grouper	South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Handline/ Electric Reel	1	3	2	2	0	3	3	3	2	3	N	25	26
Floating fish trap (pound net), inshore - weakfish, striped bass, scup, squid	Mid-Atlantic Pound-Net	1	3	3	1	0	3	6	3	2	1	N	24	325
Otter Trawl - fluke	Mid-Atlantic Large-Mesh Otter Trawl, Bottom	1	3	3	2	0	2	6	2	3	1	N	24	2,835
Gillnet - monkfish	New England Extra-Large-Mesh Gillnet	1	3	3	2	0	1	9	3	0	1	N	24	1,843
Dredge - scallop	Mid-Atlantic General Cat. Access Area Scallop Dredge	1	3	2	3	3	1	6	1	0	1	N	23	29
Gillnet - monkfish	Mid-Atlantic Extra-Large-Mesh Gillnet	1	3	3	1	0	2	9	1	1	1	N	23	746

Bycatch Sampling Priorities

Top Quartile

Grouping of fisheries in upper 25% of total matrix score, grouped by Sea Days Needed to Adequately Sample (20-30% CV OR 2% of trips) and Matrix Priority Score.

		Adequate Sampling Targets	
		1-100 Sea Days Needed	>100 Sea Days Needed
Matrix Priority Score	High (≥ 25)	Southeastern, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico HMS Pelagic Longline South Atlantic Skimmer Trawls South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Handline/Electric Reel	South Atlantic Coastal Gillnet South Atlantic Shrimp Trawl New England Lobster Pots Mid-Atlantic Small Mesh Otter Trawl, Bottom New England Large Mesh Gillnet New England Large Mesh Otter Trawl, Bottom Mid-Atlantic Inland Gillnets
	Low (<25)	Mid-Atlantic General Cat. Access Area Scallop Dredge	Mid-Atlantic Pound Net Mid-Atlantic Large Mesh Otter Trawl, Bottom New England Extra-Large Mesh Gillnet Mid-Atlantic Extra-Large Mesh Gillnet



Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N | Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0780 | 703.842.0779 (fax) | www.accsp.org

TIMELINE FOR FUNDING PROCESS & PROPOSAL REVIEW

March 1, 2014: Start of FY15 for ACCSP

May 2014: ACCSP request for proposals issued following approval by the Coordinating Council

June 30: Initial proposals due

July 7: Initial proposals distributed for initial review to Operations and Advisory Committees (approximately three weeks prior to call to review)

Week of July 21: Operations and Advisory Committees conference call to review initial proposals

August 11: Feedback submitted to PIs on initial proposals

September 1: Revised proposals due

September 8: Revised proposals distributed for final review to Operations and Advisory Committees (three weeks+ to review before in-person meeting)

October 1-2: ACCSP Operations and Advisory Committee Meeting for rankings

Late October: Coordinating Council approves projects

Early 2015: ACCSP distributes award letters for funded projects

Our vision is to produce dependable and timely marine fishery statistics for Atlantic coast fisheries that are collected, processed, and disseminated according to common standards agreed upon by all program partners.

Ranking Guide - Maintenance Projects:

Primary Program Priority	Point Range	Description of ranking consideration
Catch and Effort	0-10	Rank based on range within module and level of sampling defined under Program design. When considering biological or bycatch funding rank according to priority matrices.
Biological Sampling	0-8	
Bycatch/Species Interactions	0-6	
Social and Economic	0-4	
Metadata	+2	Additional points if metadata collected and supplied to Program defined within the proposal.

Project Quality Factors	Point Range	Description of ranking consideration
Multi-Partner/Regional impact including broad applications.	0-5	Rank based on the number of Partners involved in project OR regional scope of proposal (e.g. geographic range of the stock).
> yr 2 contains funding transition plan and/or justification for continuance	0-4	Rank based on defined funding transition plan away from Program funding or viable justification for continued Program funding.
In-kind contribution	0-4	1=1%-25% 2=26%-50% 3=51%-75% 4=76%-99%
Improvement in data quality/quantity/timeliness	0-4	1=Maintain minimum level of needed data collections. ↓ 4=Improvements in data collection reflecting 100% of related module as defined within the Program design.
Potential secondary module as a by-product (In program priority order)	0-4, 0-3, 0-2, 0-1	Rank based on additional module data collection and level of collection as defined within the Program design of individual module.
Impact on stock assessment	0-3	Rank based on the level of data collection that leads to new or greatly improved stock assessments.

Other Factors	Point Range	Description of ranking consideration
Properly Prepared	0-5	Meets requirements as specified in funding decision document Step2b and Guidelines

Ranking Guide - New Projects:

Program Priority	Point Range	Description of ranking consideration
Catch and Effort	0-10	Rank based on range within module and level of sampling defined under Program design. When considering biological or bycatch funding rank according to priority matrices.
Biological Sampling	0-8	
Bycatch/Species Interactions	0-6	
Social and Economic	0-4	
Metadata	+2	Additional points if metadata collected and supplied to Program defined within the proposal.

Project Quality Factors	Point Range	Description of ranking consideration
Multi-Partner/Regional impact including broad applications.	0-5	Rank based on the number of Partners involved in project or regional scope of proposal (e.g. fisheries sampled).
Contains funding transition plan / Defined end-point	0-4	Rank based on quality of funding transition plan or defined end point.
In-kind contribution	0-4	1=1% -25% 2=26% -50% 3=51% -75% 4=76% -99%
Improvement in data quality/quantity/timeliness	0-4	1=Maintain minimum level of needed data collections. ↓ 4=Improvements in data collection reflecting 100% of related module as defined within the Program design.
Potential secondary module as a by-product (In program priority order)	0-4, 0-3, 0-2, 0-1	Rank based on additional module data collection and level of collection as defined within the Program design of individual module.
Impact on stock assessment	0-3	Rank based on the level of data collection that leads to new or greatly improved stock assessments.

Other Factors	Point Range	Description of ranking consideration
Innovative	0-5	Rank based on new technology, methodology, financial savings, etc.
Properly Prepared	0-5	Meets requirements as specified in funding decision document Step2b and Guidelines