

Council Member Ongoing Development (CMOD)

A CCC-sponsored function

The Council Coordinating Committee (CCC) Steering Committee for Council Member Ongoing Development (CMOD)¹ was created by the CCC in November 2019. The Steering Committee met by phone on March 16, 2020, and finalized this report by email.

CCC CMOD Steering Committee Synthesis for CCC

The CCC Steering Committee is moving forward with planning for the first CMOD training.

- NEFMC has volunteered to be the first Council to host the CMOD training, and is working with others on the Steering Committee to develop and manage a contract with a facilitator.
- NMFS has affirmed that it supports the Councils' cost-sharing proposal in principle (whereby NMFS would pay 50% of shared costs for each event, and each Council would pay an equal part of the Councils' half of shared costs), though this is not a guarantee of funds every year. NMFS is, however, able to support a 2021 CMOD event with \$55,000 in 2020 funds.
- We are therefore still tentatively planning for the first training in 2021, while recognizing that the timeline may shift in response to circumstances surrounding covid-19.
- As requested by the CCC, the event location will be chosen so as to minimize travel costs for all Councils and NMFS attendees, as all entities will pay travel for their own participants.
- The Steering Committee recommends maintaining the number of attendees as originally proposed (approximately 42); see further justification below.

The Steering Committee recommends that the CCC endorse the following topics for the first CMOD training: the theme for the training would be exploring new approaches to EBFM, with a skill development session focused on developing successful motions.

CMOD Planning

Tom Nies, NEFMC, offered to host the first CMOD meeting, to which the Steering Committee agreed. As outlined in the November 2019 [CMOD proposal](#), the responsibilities of the host Council include working with the Steering Committee to arrange the contract for a meeting facilitator to plan, organize, and run the training workshop.

Stephanie Hunt reported that NMFS has agreed in principle to the cost-sharing proposal as outlined in November 2019, whereby the agency pays 50% of shared costs for the venue and facilitator, and the Councils share the remaining half equally. NMFS cannot guarantee that funding will be available biennially for the training event, but **NMFS has committed to supporting the proposed 2021 training workshop using 2020 funds.**

¹ NPFMC – Bill Tweit (chair), Diana Evans, David Witherell; NEFMC – Tom Nies; MAFMC – Mary Sabo; SAFMC – John Carmichael; CFMC – Miguel Rolon; GMFMC – Emily Muehlstein; PPMC – Bob Dooley; WPFMC – Kitty Simmonds; NMFS – Stephanie Hunt.

In November, the CCC reiterated the need to minimize travel costs to the extent possible, as all entities will pay travel for their own participants, and prohibitive travel costs should not compromise Councils' ability to send participants. Tom prefers to have the meeting facilitator arrange the venue, especially if it is not to be local to New England, and through them, **Tom will identify a venue that is centralized and close to a major airport.**

The CCC also expressed concern with respect to the proposed size of the training workshop, which was described to the CCC as not to exceed 50 persons. This number is slightly misleading, however, as this rounded estimate includes facilitators and invited speakers. In fact, the proposal limits attendees to 42; four persons from each Council (suggesting 3 members and 1 staff), and 10 persons from NMFS. This size is consistent with Fisheries Forum workshops that have occurred successfully in the past, and an effective facilitator can ensure that all participants have the opportunity to engage (for example, through the use of small group breakouts). The Committee discussed different options for reducing the participant group, but in the end felt strongly that the existing recommendation is the best way to ensure that all Council members have an opportunity to attend the training at least once if appointed to three terms; to allow Council staff to participate; and to allow full participation by NMFS regional office and headquarters staff. **The Committee requests the CCC support the proposed workshop size for the first year, and then reevaluate if necessary.**

Following the meeting, Tom circulated a draft Request for Proposals to the Steering Committee, and intends to maintain a timeline that will allow the contract to be awarded in time to obligate NMFS' 2020 funding to support the training. **By email, the Committee agreed on Terms of Reference for the training program,** which state explicitly that no policy decisions or recommendations will be made by attendees at these trainings.

Topics for the first CMOD training

The group discussed the three suggestions for topics to explore at the initial workshop (movement of stocks, managing in an era of increasing uncertainty, and new approaches to EBFM), and **the Steering Committee recommends that theme of the first training should be new approaches to EBFM.** Several Council representatives found this topic likely to be useful to their members, although it was noted that during planning the focus might shift away from "new" approaches and instead coalesce around pressing EBFM questions for which the Councils could be polled. The group avoided the movement of stocks topic as it inevitably leads to entrenched allocation discussions that are regionally specific. There was interest in the topic of addressing management in an uncertain era, for example how to use qualitative versus quantitative data in management, but the EBFM topic was considered more straightforward for the first training. Additionally, a synergy was noted with the upcoming National SSC workshop that is also addressing EBFM and ecosystem indicators in stock assessment; the CMOD training could perhaps focus on the management implementation of any scientific recommendations.

In discussion regarding the skill development component of the training, the group clarified that it would be a distinct component of the training, but likely a shorter block of time within the agenda. Given the three suggestions (chairing/facilitating an effective meeting, developing successful motions, understanding scientific treatment of uncertainty), **the Committee recommends that the skill of developing successful motions should be the focus of the first CMOD training.** This is a skill that is needed by all Council members across regions, and is one that can suitably be tackled in a 2-hour time period. Not all Council members need to chair a meeting, and understanding scientific uncertainty would take more than the allowable time.