

Council Member Ongoing Development Final Meeting Summary

April 2023

The Council Member Ongoing Development (CMOD) meeting was funded through support from the Regional Fishery Management Councils in partnership with NOAA Fisheries, and hosted by the New England Fishery Management Council.

Introduction

The Council Member Ongoing Development (CMOD) program is a new initiative of the Council Coordination Committee created to support professional development and cross-regional exchange among Regional Fishery Management Council members and staff. CMOD is funded through support from the Regional Fishery Management Councils in partnership with NOAA Fisheries. CMOD meetings are designed to support the policy-neutral exchange of information and do not result in decisions or recommendations.

The first CMOD meeting was held November 15-16, 2022 in Denver, Colorado and focused on ecosystem based fisheries management (EBFM) and ecosystem approaches to fisheries management (EAFM), with a skills focus on developing effective motions. Participants included 23 Council members, 8 Council staff members, and 11 NMFS staff representing all eight Council regions. The meeting was led by external facilitators, who developed the meeting objectives and agenda with input from a CMOD Steering Committee.

Meeting objectives

- Explore the regional EBFM/EAFM approaches being developed and implemented across Council regions;
- Consider the range of scientific inputs that support EBFM/EAFM and “on-ramps” for integrating this information into Council processes;
- Explore tools being developed to help Councils understand ecosystem dynamics, assess risk, and explore tradeoffs;
- Discuss challenges and opportunities for building long-term capacity to support EBFM/EAFM within Council processes; and
- Consider the characteristics of a successful motion and share individual experiences relating to the process and “art” of scoping, crafting, and proposing effective motions.

Summary and meeting materials

The following summary captures highlights and themes of discussion from the November 2022 CMOD meeting, and is intended to support Councils' ongoing EBFM/EAFM efforts and identify opportunities for ongoing cross-regional exchange. The ideas described below are not comprehensive and do not represent consensus opinion. The summary is organized into three sections as follows:

1. **Building Council capacity for EBFM and EAFM**

Capacity-building is one of the primary objectives of the CMOD program. This section includes a synthesis of ideas and perspectives on building capacity within the Council community to support and engage in EBFM/EAFM.

2. **Presentations and Q&A**

This section includes very brief summaries of CMOD presentations, and topic-specific questions and comments. Presentation slides are available on the CMOD website.

3. **Skills session: Making effective motions**

This section includes a standalone summary of the skills-focused session which explored perspectives on making, scoping, crafting, and introducing motions and is not specific to the topic of EBFM/EAFM.

The meeting agenda, presentations, and additional information about the CMOD program are available at <http://www.fisherycouncils.org/cmmod>.

1. Building Council capacity for EBFM and EAFM

A central theme of the CMOD meeting was building capacity within the Council community to support EBFM/EAFM. This section includes a synthesis of capacity-building ideas, opportunities, and challenges discussed by the group throughout the CMOD meeting.

1.1 Council process capacity

Building the capacity to support EBFM/EAFM involves the entire Council community, including members, staff, advisors, NMFS and other partners. CMOD participants discussed capacity-building in terms of 1) establishing a shared vocabulary and baseline level of knowledge, 2) integrating ecosystem considerations more fully into Council processes, and 3) building the bench of individuals and “champions” who actively engage in their Councils’ ecosystem work.

The group shared the following ideas.

- *Begin with a baseline.* Participants discussed the value of creating a shared baseline and a common foundation in the basics of EBFM/EAFM, for example through NMFS’ annual training for new Council members and region-specific materials.
- *Dedicate time and agenda space.* Participants described EBFM/EAFM as both a deliberate paradigm shift from single-species management and an approach that can be integrated through the established Council process. Ecosystem information can be built into the ongoing learning that occurs through reading, discussion, and the regular flow of information. Some participants felt that having regularly scheduled ecosystem agenda items helps set expectations and encourage preparation, and creates space for Council members and advisors to discuss, demystify, interact with, and consider ecosystem information in the context of fishery management plans (FMPs) and their individual interests.
- *Identify objectives clearly.* Participants noted that there are many different drivers for why EBFM/EAFM is being pursued in each region, and also different expectations among stakeholders as to what it is able to achieve. Setting clear objectives at the outset for ecosystem projects or EBFM initiatives can help scientists bring back targeted advice as well as help the Council manage its own and stakeholder expectations appropriately.
- *Build specialized capacity.* All Councils convene specialized groups including technical teams, committees, and advisory bodies that help provide focus, expertise, and additional bandwidth to accomplish their work. Participants noted that ad hoc groups can provide Councils with flexibility to adjust the composition and expertise of membership to support specific tasks. Participants also suggested greater inclusion of FMP-focused advisory panels (APs) in Councils’ ecosystem work. APs provide an existing structure to help educate and build interest among more members of the Council community.

Additionally, incoming Council members often gain experience through participating as advisors.

- *Encourage regional and internal communication.* In addition to building capacity at the Council level, it's valuable to build capacity at a regional level between Councils and NMFS regional offices and science centers. This includes routine communication and "who is doing what" as well as more active coordination and prioritization. The group also discussed the importance of cross-communication with and between NMFS staff and the different agency divisions; for example between ecosystem and stock assessment groups, to help build and maintain on-ramps for ecosystem information.
- *Practice clear, direct communication.* Communicating about ecosystem information in clear, simple terms enables the broader Council community to contribute, and expands the audience of people able to actively engage. Participants suggested simplifying and distilling key messages, clearly demonstrating how ecosystem science is used, and relating EBFM/EAFM to specific issues stakeholders care about. Examples should ideally include positive outcomes to stakeholders from using ecosystem information, not just those that result in catch restrictions. Another suggestion was to highlight the parallels between EBFM/EAFM and familiar Council tasks including setting objectives and considering tradeoffs and cumulative impacts.
- *Learn from crisis situations.* Many participants described valuable lessons learned from working through difficult situations (e.g., stock crashes, anomalous conditions) related to ecosystem change. While challenging, these situations can also focus the Council community on a shared problem and can provide the opportunity to build trust through transparency and clear communication between scientists, managers, and stakeholders. Participants also described crisis situations as an opportunity to establish and strengthen processes and relationships which improve the Council process overall as well as providing a platform to work through future challenges.
- *Make EBFM/EAFM more tangible.* While some members of the Council community may be able to engage in EBFM/EAFM at the big picture, conceptual level, others benefit from having a more concrete understanding of specific issues and opportunities. Several CMOD presentations featured approaches to framing possibilities or prioritizing potential actions, including potential future scenarios (West and East Coast climate scenario planning), risk assessment (Mid-Atlantic), management strategy evaluations (MSEs), and stakeholder education and input workshops. While proficiency in EBFM/EAFM will naturally evolve over time, participants commented that the step of translating ecosystem concepts into tangible possibilities enabled the Council community to more fully engage and have a stake in ecosystem-based discussions.
- *Continue sharing regional experiences.* CMOD participants agreed the Regional Fishery Management Councils are a community of practice that can continue to build capacity by sharing their EBFM/EAFM experience. Participants commented on the value of

borrowing and adapting ideas from other regions, and described EBFM/EAFM as a customizable collection of ideas and approaches for bringing information into Council processes. The group also noted the value of learning from different EBFM/EAFM trajectories and timelines. While resources and information availability vary by region, all Councils have the opportunity to learn and try new ideas.

- *Concerns about funding to support EBFM/EAFM.* As discussed above, the research, agency coordination, and engagement activities identified to support ecosystem information uptake in the Council process are valuable. Some participants noted concern, however, with the availability of funding resources to support this work.

1.2 Ecosystem Status Reports

CMOD participants and speakers agreed that dialogue between Councils and NMFS scientists can enhance the utility of Ecosystem Status Reports (ESR) to inform fisheries management. The group shared the following experiences and ideas for engaging with ESR information and supporting an iterative ESR development process.

- *Councils and ESR leads can focus the content and structure of ESRs.* Participants shared several approaches for making ESRs useful and accessible to Councils including limits on report length (e.g., PFMC sets a 20-page limit) and the use of executive summaries, topic summaries, briefs, visuals, storytelling and interpretive narratives. Councils have also found it valuable to work with regional leads to align the timing of ESRs with Council processes (e.g., NPFMC receives ESRs in December to align with their annual specifications process; MAFMC receives their ESR early in the year).
- *Councils can take an active role in the development of ESR analyses.* PFMC and NMFS West Coast participants described working together to develop a new ESR appendix focused on indicators of long-term climate change. The Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) team initiated this work in response to a Council request. They produced an example appendix as a starting point for discussion and finding alignment between the Council's interests and the information the IEA team is able to provide.
- *Ecosystem disruptions provide a vantage point for asking questions.* Participants were interested in the insight or warning signs that ESRs can provide leading up to a disruption, such as the example of Gulf of Alaska Pacific Cod (see Section 2.4.1), as well as conditions following a disruption. For example, participants asked how ESRs could provide insight into changes such as competition between species, the spread of invasive species, and changing trophic relationships.
- *ESRs are a vehicle for building relationships and strong science communication skills.* Several participants commented that their Councils' engagement with NMFS ESR leads is a strength of their regions' ecosystem work, particularly when IEA and ESR scientists regularly interact and participate in Council processes. This collaborative capacity is built

through the deliberate efforts of those involved to build strong, transparent relationships and find new ways to communicate complex information in a way that meets the Council's needs.

1.3 Stakeholder engagement

Many of the regional examples shared at the CMOD meeting included extensive outreach to stakeholders. Participants emphasized the importance of public engagement in the context of Council's EBFM/EAFM work. Stakeholder input helps Councils articulate questions, concerns and objectives, and identify potential management responses aligned with fishery goals. Understanding how stakeholders perceive and interact with the ecosystem through conceptual modeling and scenario planning provides a shared frame of reference for translating EBFM/EAFM concepts to implementation strategies. Strong stakeholder relationships and communication can also help build trust to navigate difficult situations and changing conditions. Participants also shared how EBFM/EAFM can provide the basis for concerted outreach efforts and building relationships with people and agencies that are not routine participants in the Council process.

Participants shared the following thoughts on building stakeholder capacity and supporting productive participation in the Council process.

- *Connect stakeholders with education and training.* Participants emphasized that outreach is not just a top-down process of sharing information; it can also be a bottom-up strategy of equipping stakeholders to participate in the process. Engaging in the Council process on EBFM/EAFM (or any issue) begins with understanding the Council process and how and when to engage. Participants commented on the value of structured approaches and curricula, including the Marine Resource Education Program (MREP), to introduce EBFM/EAFM concepts and tools.
- *Expand the meaning of "engagement."* Engaging in the Council process requires a significant investment by stakeholders given the time commitment required to attend meetings and the complexity of the process. Participants emphasized clear, accessible messaging, multiple ways of sharing information (e.g. videos), building relationships with community leaders and key stakeholders who help others engage, and holding meetings (e.g. workshops and port meetings aside from regularly scheduled Council business meetings) in community venues rather than hotels.
- *Relate EBFM/EAFM to stakeholders' interests.* CMOD participants felt stakeholders are more able to engage in EBFM/EAFM from the vantage point of their specific issue and priorities. The group suggested framing EBFM/EAFM as a tool to understand and work through the issues people care about.
- *Recognize the unique opportunities and challenges of engaging stakeholders in EAFM/EBFM.* While early and ongoing outreach is important when undertaking any new

initiative, participants commented on the attributes of EBFM/EAFM that can make it difficult to sustain public involvement. Ecosystem initiatives often unfold over a long timeline, which makes it challenging to engage people early and often, and maintain consistent involvement. This is particularly challenging when longer-term ecosystem issues compete with other high priority or near term issues requiring stakeholders' attention. There may also be different expectations for EBFM/EAFM work, particularly when there are questions or concerns that can't be addressed until later in the process.

2. Meeting presentations and discussions

This section is a chronological summary of CMOD sessions, including brief summaries of presentations and highlights from Q&A and discussion that are not captured above. The purpose of this section is to provide a more detailed overview of the agenda to help the Council community utilize CMOD resources, including presentations and regional overviews, and encourage participants to connect with their colleagues.

2.1 Setting the stage: Regional approaches to EBFM and EAFM

The CMOD meeting began with a set of eight short talks by Council staff to introduce each Council's ecosystem work and provide a frame of reference for later discussions. These presentations highlighted the distinctive attributes of each Council's managed fisheries and marine ecosystems, and the approaches each Council is taking or considering to integrate ecosystem information into Council processes through Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs) and other pathways. Council staff also prepared short reference documents with links to resources and additional information. These are available on the CMOD meeting website.

CMOD participants shared their perspectives on the regional issues that shape their regions' ecosystem work, and the potential value Councils and their stakeholders see in integrating EBFM/EAFM more fully into Council processes. Themes included the following.

- *Climate change*: Councils are already experiencing ecosystem disruption and change impacting the productivity and distribution of managed stocks. These changes in turn create challenges to fisheries management and governance, and the ability of the Council process to respond and adapt. Many participants stated that they view increased integration of EBFM/EAFM tools as fundamental to coping with climate change and taking a proactive rather than a reactive approach.
- *Interactions between fisheries, stocks, and FMPs*: Participants described the challenges of interactions between stocks (e.g., management actions for one stock affecting others within a multispecies FMP) and between FMPs (e.g., issues related to permitting, bycatch, forage fish management). EBFM/EAFM, when integrated into the fishery management infrastructure, accommodates a more holistic approach to considering tradeoffs and interactions between fisheries and the social, economic, biological, and ecological facets of ecosystems.
- *People and fishing as part of the ecosystem*: Many participants commented that the concept of EBFM/EAFM resonates and feels intuitive to their stakeholders. They felt EBFM/EAFM can provide a framework to recognize and value humans and fisheries as part of the ecosystem, and feels more inclusive of social and economic dimensions of fisheries. Some participants described growing support and even demand from their stakeholders to more fully account for ecosystem factors, for example in response to

specific events like fishery crashes or long-standing concerns such as stability and permitting flexibility.

- *Fisheries in the broader marine environment*: Participants felt EBFM/EAFM can provide a way to more formally recognize that fisheries are affected by factors other than fishing effort. EBFM/EAFM can help account for connectivity between Council jurisdictions in federal waters and other parts of the marine ecosystem, including the land-sea interface and coastal, nearshore and pelagic systems. Many participants also commented on the growing footprint of other ocean uses (e.g., offshore wind) and designations (e.g. marine monuments) and the increasing need to coordinate and share information across agencies and jurisdictions.

2.2 Single-species management

CMOD discussions began with an overview of the existing pathways and “on-ramps” for Councils to integrate ecosystem information through single-species management and the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) framework. For many Councils, ESRs and related products are the primary pathway for receiving ecosystem information. In some regions, particularly where ESRs are still in development, other documents such as Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) reports and fishery performance reports¹ can help provide ecosystem context. This session reinforced that all Council regions have valuable experience incorporating the ecosystem information they currently have available.

Ecosystem information inputs: Dr. Sarah Gaichas, NMFS NEFSC, provided a high-level overview of ecosystem information inputs, emphasizing there are many options and entry points to support a systematic ecosystem approach. She described ecosystem indicators as providing insight into performance relative to objectives, and context that can affect the achievement of those objectives. Dr. Gaichas emphasized that setting objectives and considering performance relative to limits and thresholds are important and familiar Council functions, and there are many ways of integrating ecosystem information through existing processes.

NPFMC specifications process: Dr. Elizabeth Siddon, NMFS AFSC, described NPFMC’s approach to integrating ecosystem information into Council processes through the Council’s annual stock assessment and harvest specifications cycle. Three important information inputs provide qualitative and quantitative context that may inform harvest decisions, including 1) ESRs and products, 2) Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profiles, and 3) risk tables, which are used to provide consistent documentation of information external to assessment models. Dr. Siddon highlighted what has worked well for the North Pacific Council process and encouraged participants to consider what could be adapted and shared across regions.

¹ For example, as prepared by the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Councils

Value of qualitative ecosystem information

Participants discussed how ecosystem information can be quantitative or qualitative. Qualitative information (also referred to as contextual or descriptive) is based on quantitative data, though may lack additional context such as a threshold value or mechanistic relationship. Qualitative information can be applied in a quantitative way through the quota setting process. Speakers noted that while not all ecosystem indicators have baseline values (for example, to help interpret trends or what is normal, above, or below average), they can provide valuable insight into past and current ecosystem conditions. Interpreting and incorporating anecdotal and community observations is an area of ongoing work.

2.3 EBFM/EAFM: The bigger picture

Several Councils have developed structured approaches to look across FMPs for opportunities to integrate ecosystem information and principles into Council processes. The Pacific, Mid-Atlantic, North Pacific, and most recently the Gulf of Mexico Councils have developed modular or initiative-based approaches to identifying discrete, time bounded projects under the umbrella of an FEP. The New England Council is exploring a very different approach that would potentially restructure the organization of existing FMPs. Participants discussed the drivers for looking beyond single-species management and explored three regional examples.

The Pacific Council's FEP Initiatives Appendix: Four participants from the Pacific Council and NMFS West Coast Region participated in a panel discussion and described how PFMC uses the Initiatives Appendix of its FEP as a living resource to identify, discuss, and periodically select an initiative to pursue.

The Mid-Atlantic Council's Risk Assessment: Dr. Sarah Gaichas, NMFS NEFSC, described the region's annual State of the Ecosystem report and approach of characterizing performance and risks to meeting management objectives. The MAFMC uses a risk assessment tool to prioritize higher risk ecosystem issues for further exploration.

The New England Council's example Fishery Ecosystem Plan (eFEP) and stakeholder workshops: Andy Applegate, NEFMC staff, described development of an example FEP for Georges Bank that, if adopted, could restructure existing FMPs and manage species by functional groups with an ecosystem cap, stock complex ceilings and species biomass floors. The Council is developing a prototype MSE and conducting stakeholder outreach workshops to build understanding of what this approach could look like.

Bringing focus to ecosystem work at the Council

Participants discussed how broader ecosystem management frameworks can help bring focus to ecosystem work. Using initiatives and modules within an FEP provides a way to advance specific projects; however, participants noted the challenge of keeping ecosystem initiatives bounded and manageable, particularly for work that spans multiple ideas or has no clear endpoint. Maintaining a list or appendix of issues can help Councils keep track of topics and consider the information, inputs, workload and scope of projects. This also provides a structured way to add new ideas, revisit priorities, and identify work that can be pursued outside of an initiative approach. Participants also noted that if Councils only have the capacity to address one issue at a time, lists may become dated.

Efficiency and coordination in reports and documents

Participants also discussed opportunities for Councils and NMFS to build efficiencies and focus into the EBFM/EAFM process. Examples include automating more of the preparation of Ecosystem Status Reports (e.g., by streamlining the inputting of new data), and coordination across planning documents including FEPs and agency documents such as Climate Regional Action Plans and IEA 5-year plans). Participants noted that it's important to balance efficiency with adequate opportunity to explore new ideas and concepts.

2.4 Navigating Ecosystem Change

The second day of the CMOD meeting began with a two-part exploration of the changes that are impacting Council-managed fisheries, and how Councils and their partners are using ecosystem information to understand, monitor, and respond to changing environmental conditions.

2.4.1 Disruption and short-term impacts

The first part of this session on ecosystem change featured three regional examples of fishery managers navigating rapidly changing ecosystem conditions. Speakers shared three examples of collaborating, sharing information and building a shared understanding among managers, scientists, and stakeholders in a rapid-response scenario.

Gulf of Mexico red tide: Dr. Mandy Karnauskas, NMFS SEFSC, shared the Gulf of Mexico region's experience with episodic red tide Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) that can adversely impact target stocks including red and gag grouper, and have broader impacts to the marine ecosystem, communities, and tourism economy. Dr. Karnauskas described work by SEFSC scientists to understand the ecological and human impacts of red tide events, including a series of participatory stakeholder workshops in 2018 with the goal of increasing information flow

between scientists, managers, and stakeholders, in support of improved stock assessment and ecosystem assessments.

Oregon Dungeness crab: Jessica Watson, PFMC and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, described the use of ecosystem information to focus efforts to reduce whale entanglements in the state-managed West Coast Dungeness crab fishery. Gaining insight into the environmental conditions that influence seasonal whale distribution can help managers understand and reduce the co-occurrence of fishing gear and whales. Ms. Watson emphasized the importance of assessing risk to focus risk reduction measures, and collaboration with scientific partners and advisors to focus research questions.

Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod: Bill Tweit, NPFMC and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, provided a Council member perspective on responding in-season to the drastic decline of Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod. The stock experienced significant mortality following a 2014-2016 marine heatwave that ultimately resulted in the Council adopting an 80% reduction in harvest for 2018. Mr. Tweit described the situation as a “stress test” to the Council system and emphasized the importance of transparency and early, clear communication between ecosystem scientists, stock assessment leads, managers, advisors, and the public.

Disruptions can present new opportunities

Participants discussed that while rapid-response scenarios are challenging, they can disrupt “business as usual” in a constructive way, including:

- Focusing the Council community on shared problems – The group noted that working through a crisis can be an opportunity to foster communication, trust, and shared scientific understanding. However, these positive outcomes are not universal and can be influenced by how a fishery is managed and the ability of participants to adapt and weather change. Speakers emphasized that crisis management demands empathy and transparency to bring people along for the process of working through a problem.
- Prompting the collection and use of new information – The examples discussed in this session highlighted the opportunity for using existing data in non-traditional ways to solve new problems. Participants also shared strong interest in the agency collaborating with fishery participants to support data collection and sampling, as well as shared questions about how to ensure data are usable for science and management.
- Creating opportunities for collaboration – Participants discussed how rapid ecosystem change can encourage networking and collaboration with states and other partners to fund and gather information in a short time frame. Speakers also emphasized the value of collaborating across disciplines, and how the NMFS IEA Program helps encourage this.

Addressing concerns that are outside of Councils’ jurisdiction

The group also questioned what Councils can do within their authorities to address the

underlying causes of land-based impacts to fisheries, such as surface water runoff in the case of HABS. While direct authorities are limited, opportunities do exist to share information and communicate concerns with the agencies that have jurisdiction over issues of concern. Participants identified several examples including communicating with other agencies about Council perspectives (e.g., presenting to a state-convened Red Tide Task Force, PFMC writing letters to other agencies regarding salmon management), consultation authorities and cooperative agreements (e.g., with EPA under 404(q) of the Clean Water Act), and using scientific tools to assess land-based impacts (e.g., ecosystem models like Atlantis).

2.4.2 Planning for the unknown

The second part of this session examined how the Pacific Council and three East Coast Councils are using climate scenario planning to tackle the complex issue of climate change by exploring a range of hypothetical future ecosystem and fishery conditions.

Pacific Climate Change Scenario Planning: Corey Ridings, PFMC member, described the Pacific Council's recently completed scenario planning process, which was undertaken as part of the Climate and Communities Initiative under the Council's FEP. Ms. Ridings described the steps of the Council's scenario planning process, and the potential action items identified through this work that could be undertaken through future FEP initiatives or other Council activities.

East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning: Brandon Muffley, MAFMC staff, described the ongoing scenario planning work undertaken as a joint initiative involving the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic Councils, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and NMFS. Mr. Muffley described how the structure and objectives of this scenario planning exercise have been adapted to a regional scale and to focus on the jurisdictional and governance challenges of climate change.

Developing a climate change appendix: Dr. Andrew Leising, NMFS SWFSC, described developing a new climate change appendix for the California Current Ecosystem Status Report, which was one of the actions identified through the Pacific Council's scenario planning process.

Lessons learned from scenario planning

Speakers and participants acknowledged that planning ahead can be difficult in the Council process given other near-term priorities and the uncertainty of a potential response to longer-term threats. The group noted that scenario planning can encourage the Council community to look at the future in different ways, engage a broad group of stakeholders and create an outlet to share ideas and insights that might not come up in the usual Council process. The Pacific and East Coast planning approaches envisioned what fisheries could look like in the year 2040, which they found to be a useful timeframe to think beyond the usual

planning horizon while still maintaining a reasonable timeframe for considering near-term preparation for future changes. While scenario planning doesn't necessarily provide a clear path forward, it helps the Council community exclude options, articulate questions and could complement other planning tools such as MSE (e.g., climate scenarios could be used to help inform different MSE operating models.)

2.5 New sources of information and knowledge

CFMC Conceptual Ecosystem Models: Dr. Graciela García-Moliner, CFMC, described the Council's work with regional District Advisory Panels (DAPs) and its Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) to develop a set of Ecosystem Conceptual Models as an early step in the development of a FEP. The Council's DAPs and SSC each met with the objectives of describing the ecological and socioeconomic drivers that impact fisheries and the marine ecosystem, and identifying risks, linkages, and leverage points. Dr. García-Moliner described how this work helped identify priority concerns and focus the work of exploring available data.

Michelle Duval, MAFMC member and working in her role as a consultant, described building on this work with a series of stakeholder engagement workshops to incorporate a wider cross-section of perspectives and user groups.

Dolphin participatory workshops: Dr. Mandy Karnauskas, NMFS SEFSC, described a series of participatory stakeholder workshops intended to increase communication between scientists, managers, and stakeholders to better understand the dolphin fishery. This work is a collaboration between NMFS SEFSC and the South Atlantic Council, with workshops first held in 2020-2021 and continuing in 2023. These meetings provide insight into how stakeholders perceive fishery dynamics, explore their questions, concerns, and objectives, and generate questions and hypotheses for further exploration. Dr. Karnauskas explained that this participatory modeling approach can inform the uncertainties that can be considered in a MSE approach.

CMOD participants shared additional examples of exploring new information sources and pathways for integrating this information into Council processes, including the South Atlantic Council's Citizen Science Program and the North Pacific Council's Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence (LKTKS) Action Module under the Bering Sea FEP. The experiences shared in this session demonstrate approaches to including people and fishing as part of the ecosystem, and opportunities to build engagement and buy-in by linking stakeholders' firsthand experiences and knowledge to the scientific underpinnings of the Council process.

3. Skills Session: Developing Effective Motions

In addition to supporting ongoing education and cross-regional information sharing around a management topic, CMOD meetings are intended to further develop the skills needed for effective decision making in the public policy arena. For the 2022 CMOD meeting, the development of effective motions was selected as the skills focus. While Council members receive training in the principles and process of Robert's Rules of Order, making effective motions within that framework can be challenging. Some have described the process for developing, drafting, and introducing motions as an art that is best learned through experience and grounded in the specifics of each Council's process and traditions. Through breakout group discussions, CMOD participants shared their experience learning to make motions and reflected on the attributes of effective motions and the regional context that informs those attributes.

Attributes of an effective motion

What makes a motion "effective" often depends on what the motion is trying to accomplish, and the level of complexity and controversy involved. For example, administrative actions can be simple and straightforward, while more complex actions can require extensive scoping and coordination. Non-routine actions, like starting a new process or developing policy statements may require a greater focus on the specific process to be undertaken and the expected outcome. Looking across the different types of Council motions, CMOD participants identified the following as important steps for developing effective motions:

- *Do your homework.* Participants emphasized the importance of advance planning and coordination. When crafting a motion, it's valuable to develop a mastery of the topic, read all available materials, ask questions, and understand the history and context of the specific issue being addressed. Another important aspect is understanding specifically what the motion will accomplish and "right-sizing" the motion to Council's process and capacity. For example, can the motion be implemented? Will it have the outcome intended, and is the motion realistic in terms of the Council's workload and resources? Participants discussed the value of engaging Council staff, NMFS staff, NOAA General Counsel and other topical experts early in the process to ensure the motion is viable.
- *Communicate and socialize your motion.* In addition to consulting with others on the viability and mechanics of the motion, participants emphasized the importance of communicating with others and engaging them in the development of the motion. This includes other Council members, SSCs, advisory bodies, stakeholders and Council staff. Socializing the motion in advance facilitates a better understanding of different perspectives, ideas and concerns, supports compromise and a transparent process, and allows Council staff to provide valuable guidance.
- *Use clear and specific language.* Participants noted that effective motions should be specific, succinct and transparent, and contain the appropriate level of detail. The right level of detail may be characteristic to each motion, providing enough detail to be very clear and unambiguous, but not overly detailed to a point where the Council gets

distracted with ancillary details or inadvertently constrains the ability of Council staff and NMFS to implement the action. Participants also discussed the value of referencing advisory body recommendations and the purpose and need for the action.

- *Clearly explain the rationale for your motion.* When introducing motions, participants emphasized the importance of providing a clear and organized rationale that matches the complexity of the motion. For simple motions, a short, succinct rationale may suffice. For more complex motions, it may be helpful to retrace steps, review the input received, and explain why something isn't included in the motion, or why a different approach is being taken. This increases transparency and allows stakeholders to track and understand the process and feel heard and considered even if the outcome is not what some desired. It may also be helpful to reference past precedent and how the motion supports established goals and objectives. Finally, participants discussed the important role of the Council Chair to lead and organize the discussion and allow the motion maker and other Council members to share their perspective.

Regional and issue-specific factors for effective motions

While the above steps for effective motions may be helpful in a variety of circumstances, what makes a motion effective may be specific to different Council regions and fishery issues. The group's discussion highlighted a variety of regional and procedural differences across the eight Council regions informed by Council composition, cultural norms, the inner workings of the Council process, and political dynamics. For example, Councils have different approaches and expectations for advanced planning, the interplay and coordination between Council members, states and NMFS, the timing of public comment on actions, and the process for deliberation around the Council table. Based on each Council's internal process and the mechanisms for coordination, there may also be differences on which actions or tasks are best done through a formal motion versus another mechanism (e.g., research requests, information gathering).

Even within a particular Council region, the specific fishery or issue being addressed, and the types of action being taken can all influence the steps and attributes that make a motion effective. Participants discussed how the motion's relationship to the larger context and decision-making process is an important factor. For example, if the Council has been working on an issue for some time and has reached consensus or an acceptable compromise, an effective motion may be one that moves quickly through the process with minimal amendments or questions. If there are still details to be worked out, an effective motion may be one that is well refined but still leaves room to be responsive to public input and the Council's discussion. However, if a Council is working on a new or particularly complex issue, an effective motion may be one that opens a robust debate to further define the problem and understand different views.

Learning to make effective motions

Drawing on their personal experience, participants identified several strategies and tools that Council members may find valuable for building their skills with developing, drafting and speaking to motions.

- *Learn from others.* Watching fellow Council members can be a helpful way to understand the context and norms, and learn the steps involved in making motions. Attending meetings of other Councils would also be helpful to learn how other regions operate.
- *Enlist mentors.* Participants emphasized the value of mentorship (from current and former Council members, as well as Council members from other regions), leaning on the expertise of Council staff and asking for help.
- *Develop reference guides.* Developing reference guides for new Council members, including regional context for making motions, would provide a valuable tool for new members.
- *“Just do it.”* For new Council members, participants suggested finding the right time and issue to begin building experience with making motions.