



Research Steering Committee Meeting

Potential Re-Development of the Mid-Atlantic Research Set-Aside Program Webinar Meeting Summary

April 2020

The Research Steering Committee (RSC) met via webinar on Tuesday, April 28, 2020 to discuss potential re-development of the research set-aside (RSA) program. The RSC's recommendations will be presented at a subsequent Council Meeting with the goal of hosting an RSA workshop in fall 2020.

RSC members present: Adam Nowalsky (Chair), Steve Heins (Vice-Chair), Chris Batsavage, Peter deFur, Tony DiLernia, Laurie Nolan, Kate Wilke, Ryan Silva (for Mike Pentony), Mike Luisi, Warren Elliott, and Matthew Seeley (MAFMC Staff)

Others present: Bob Beal (ASMFC), Toni Kerns (ASMFC), Brandon Muffley (MAFMC Staff), Cheryl Corbett, Emerson Hasbrouck (Cornell), Kristin Gerbino (Cornell), Scott Curatolo-Wagemann (Cornell), and Tara McClintock.

Summary

The RSC meeting began with a presentation from staff summarizing the goals of the webinar and workshop (proposed), the outcomes of the August 2019 RSC meeting, and the workshop logistics to be discussed on the webinar. The RSC then discussed and refined the proposed goal of the workshop along with the potential locations and scope of attendees. As discussion progressed, the RSC transitioned into developing a range of topics/options for discussion at the workshop. All recommendations for workshop development are as follows with details under each action item:

- 1. Identify the need for research via RSA in the Mid-Atlantic**
- 2. Confirm the workshop goal**
- 3. Identify workshop locations**
- 4. Identify the scope of attendees – Invitation list**
- 5. Discuss how the program will be administered**
- 6. Develop a range of topics/options for discussion at the workshop**
 - a. Discuss/Identify funding mechanisms for further development.**
 - b. Discuss how project results will be reviewed, used in management, and communicated to the Council/stakeholders**
 - c. Identify how the Council will collaborate with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**
 - d. Develop a range of topics/options for discussion at the workshop**
- 7. Next steps**

Action Items

1. Identify the need for research via RSA in the Mid-Atlantic

The RSC noted that the workshop will help answer the question related to the need RSA fulfills. Depending on the outcomes of the workshop, the RSC and Council will evaluate whether re-development of RSA is warranted. However, the RSC indicated that RSA would allow for additional resources that address Council research needs but noted that the program must be initiated with less administrative burden and be redesigned for success. To ensure the success of a re-developed program, the RSC discussed the duration of projects that received research funds in the past and noted that funds were often awarded to long term projects as opposed to short term projects. In an effort to better monitor RSA projects and acquire data for management that fills a data need, the RSC recommends focusing on short term projects over long-term projects (i.e. not surveys).

The following discussion points surrounding the need for research in the Mid-Atlantic were proposed by the RSC for the workshop:

- A re-developed program should not fund long term projects.
- RSA funds generated from one species should not be used for research on different species.
- Identify research needs and priorities using:
 - MAFMC 5-year research
 - 2020 Advisory Panel Fishery Performance Reports
 - Research suggestions from the stock assessment reports.
 - Previously completed successful RSA projects (M-A and NE)

2. Confirm the workshop goal

Goal: Develop a final recommendation on how a re-developed MAFMC RSA program would function with justification for the need and design of the program. Identify funding mechanisms and an approach to generate funding.

The RSC noted that the above goal captures everything to justify moving forward with a workshop, as the RSC wants to clarify justification for the need that emphasizes how the program is better and different.

3. Identify workshop locations

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the RSC discussed the timing and location of the workshop and noted the need to consider a venue that may be larger than what has been considered in the past due to social distancing measures. The RSC concluded that this type of workshop would be much better if conducted in person, and thus, recommended hosting the meeting later in the Fall/Winter. The RSC also recommends that remote participation be considered for Council and Committee members even if the workshop is held in-person.

Proposed Locations:

Philadelphia

Baltimore

Webinar – A webinar is being considered due to the uncertainties associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Webinars have major limitations and it will be difficult when coordinating with individuals that Committee members are not familiar with. We should consider using video conferencing if a webinar is selected as the venue.

To ask when requesting venues:

- Are bookings available for this timeline?
- What are the cancellation policies?
- What are the constraints on the number of people allowed in a room due to social distancing?

Does the RSC recommend going forward with the workshop if it has to be a webinar in 2020?

RSC Recommendation: Host a 1 to 1.5 day in-person workshop in Philadelphia/Baltimore with consideration for Council and Committee member remote participation in Fall 2020.

4. Identify the scope of attendees – Invitation list

Primary Participants:

- Committee Members
- Mid-Atlantic Council Staff
- New England Council Staff
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Staff
- ASMFC Law Enforcement Committee
- NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE)
- Northeast Fisheries Science Center
- Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO)
- Scientific and Statistical Committee (e.g. Chair)

Other Invited Participants:

- National Fisheries Institute
- State representatives (e.g. MAFMC and ASMFC Administrative Commissioners)
- MAFMC Advisory Panels
- Previously successful RSA participants
- Science Center for Marine Fisheries
- Other individuals that the RSC deems relevant

The RSC recommends sending out a broad announcement to the “Other Invited Participants” list to gauge initial interest in the workshop (include [Mid and NE] researchers and industry partners that were successful within the RSA program). The RSC deems a successful applicant as one that has previously completed a project and posted a final report.

To assist in developing the attendee list, the RSC recommends requiring pre-registration for members of the public to plan accordingly for the number of participants, with respect for social distancing.

5. Discuss how the program will be administered

- Run as a federal grant program (specific restrictions do exist)
- Do not run as a contractual program
- Noted for discussion at the workshop:
 - Should the RSC recommend the auction be used and at what level?
- Ensure OLE has the opportunity to review the specific type of administration.
 - As discussion of re-development occurs, the RSC will request a list from OLE indicating how individuals “abused the system” in order to avoid these issues in the future.
 - Continue to include a brief summary of the RSA issues.

6. Develop a range of topics/options for discussion at the workshop

a. Discuss/Identify funding mechanisms for further development.

What changes to the previous funding model (auction) are necessary?

- Overhead – Check in with leadership what costs will be covered by the Council.
- Mechanism
 - Auction
 - NE RSA approach
- Include examples of how industry funded research happens around the world (include a few case studies)
- Identify the best model for funding? (this includes revisions to the past model)

b. Discuss how project results will be reviewed, used in management, and communicated to the Council/stakeholders

Reviewed:

This topic may not be appropriate for review at the workshop and should be further discussed with the RSC and Council.

- GARFO staff indicated there is a peer review process that proposals go through prior to funding and during development.
 - Progress and final reports

- Compile a description of the old review process (see notes from Ryan Silva)
 - RSC review
- Identify a peer review process for once final reports have been submitted.
 - The SSC helps design research priorities, and thus, should review whether projects helped address the research needs.
- Require interim (progress) reports
 - Conducted through GARFO's peer review process

Used in Management:

Set the expectation that approving a project fulfills a management need.

- *Do not need the workshop to answer this question:* As the RSC approves a project, we will have identified what management niche a specific project will fulfill.
- Projects should be tied to a management/assessment need
 - Bring to the workshop as a statement (not for question).
- Projects can inform management without resulting in a specific action.

Communicated to the Council/Stakeholders:

- Present results at joint meetings when species are co-managed
- Dedicate a page to RSA projects on the webpage
 - Post project results on a “presentations” page on the Council's website (possibly with visual recordings)

c. Identify how the Council will collaborate with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

For species that are jointly managed, all RSA topics will be covered at joint Council/Board meetings.

d. Other topics

- Discuss program administration.
 - Identify what is run by GARFO/the federal grant program.
 - Identify what should be run by the Council.
- Discuss sufficient revisions to the current funding mechanisms (revised auction system) and propose other funding mechanisms.
 - Discuss methods to ensure funds are generated and used appropriately.
 - Should the program fund long term projects?
 - RSA funds generated from one species should not be used for research on different species.
- Have Law Enforcement provide detail on the intricacies of the RSA program and identify where enforcement issues often arise.
- Indicate that projects should be tied to a management/assessment need.
 - Bring to the workshop as a statement (not for question).
 - Projects can inform management without resulting in a specific action.

- Identify research needs and priorities using:
 - MAFMC 5-year research
 - 2020 Advisory Panel Fishery Performance Reports
 - Research suggestions from the stock assessment reports.
 - Previously completed successful RSA projects (M-A and NE)
- Discuss the peer review process.

7. Next steps

- Host another planning webinar?
- Look for locations in Sept-Nov in the Baltimore/Philadelphia area.
- Begin to develop a detailed workshop agenda with action items to be accomplished at the workshop.
- Look into bringing in a facilitator (possibly Andy Loftus).
- Use the primary list to start. Then convene again via webinar to refine the list.
- Draft a solicitation list and develop a timeline for when it will be sent out.
 - Solicitation will allow for recipients to notify other appropriate interested individuals.
- Note: Staff will summarize the workshop results for refinement by the RSC to make a recommendation the Council.