

SEDAR Assessment Process Revision

Steering Committee Review

October 2014

This document describes a revision to the SEDAR assessment process intended to streamline assessment development and improve the effectiveness of communication between the various participants on the assessment panel. Current application of the SEDAR process relies on numerous webinars and has become cumbersome and inefficient for all parties. Moreover, constituent representatives are actually participating less, citing the time commitment of the many meetings as excessive and intimidating.

Procedures proposed here do not deviate from prior guidance provided by the SEDAR Steering Committee. For example, the summary of the October 2007 SEDAR Steering Committee states the Committee recommended *“all analytical teams...shall be prepared to present a functioning model at the beginning of each assessment workshop, and that the analytical team should be encouraged to communicate with others on the assessment workshop panel via email or conference call as necessary to develop a functioning model.”*

Changes are required to achieve the SEDAR objective of increased participation and address the currently inadequate level of assessment throughput. The primary change proposed here is to clarify that those charged with developing the assessment may communicate as needed in order to reach TOR milestones. As a result, fewer meetings will be necessary. Meetings held will be scheduled to allow review of milestone events in assessment model development. The primary benefit of encouraging informal communication by the Analytical Team and Fishery Advisors is to allow the work to flow in a more efficient and logical manner, by recognizing that it is impossible to preschedule the process because it is impossible to know at what stages challenges and issues will arise. Desired benefits from reducing the number of meetings during assessment development include providing more time for Analytical Teams to conduct their work, easier scheduling and a more attractive commitment for Fishery Advisors, and greater and more effective participation during the meetings.

I. Assessment Process Participants

No change in participants or the appointment process is suggested. The current "Assessment Workshop Panel" name is changed to "Assessment Working Group", to reduce confusion with the current name, particularly since assessment workshops have been replaced by the more involved and extensive "assessment process". It is also hoped that use of the term 'working group' better reflects the function and operation of the group. The following are typical participants in the SEDAR assessment process.

1. Assessment Working Group (AWG): Consists of the Analytical Team (scientists from the lead agency responsible for conducting analyses) and Science Advisors (e.g. SSC and other Cooperator technical appointees)

2. Fishery advisors (FA): constituent representatives appointed by the Cooperator based in knowledge of fishery practices and the stock.
3. Observers/Attendees: Members of the public and other attendees who are not appointed by a Cooperator to one of the groups named above in #1 and #2.

II. Assessment Charge (Terms of Reference):

No change is proposed. Consistent with current practices, the process will be guided by Terms of Reference (TORs) approved by the appropriate SEDAR Cooperator (Cooperator refers to the agencies and organizations engaged in the SEDAR process and represented at the SEDAR Steering Committee, as defined in the SEDAR SOPPs).

III Assessment Process Approach: Assessment product development

It is proposed that the assessment process be conducted very similar to current data workshop process, being centered around working groups that prepare information for discussion during plenary sessions. The primary differences are logistical. The assessment process will take place over an extended period of time rather than the week devoted to the data workshop; there will typically be a single working group, the Assessment Working Group (AWG) described above, rather than the many groups convened for a data workshop; and the plenary sessions will be conducted as public meetings or webinars, scheduled in advance and occurring over a 2 to 3 month window

Assessment working groups and advisors will communicate informally and as needed, throughout the assessment process, to do the pre-decisional work necessary to develop assessment products that address the TORs and will be discussed through public plenary meetings (held as a webinar or workshop) at key points (milestones). Technical issues will be discussed by the AWG, while fishery and fishery data related issues that arise will be posed to the Fishery Advisors (FA). The intent is to allow the assessment working group to efficiently reach the important model development milestones while still preserving the public involvement that is a cornerstone of the SEDAR process. Plenary meetings will be scheduled in advance through the assessment planning process, and will be conducted and noticed in accordance with normal SEDAR meeting requirements.

Proposed Milestones.

Each milestone represents a public meeting, held either in-person or via webinar, and subject to all the administrative requirements of SEDAR (Council) activities. At each milestone meeting, the AWG and FA will review progress on the project TORS, considering alternatives and recommendations developed by the assessment workshop panel. Meeting outcomes will be consensus recommendations of the AWG to guide further model development and address TORs. The descriptions below are generalized, intended to apply across the range of SEDAR circumstances. In some cases not every item listed under a milestone will be required. For example, the continuity run referenced in Milestone 1 will not apply to first time benchmark assessments.

Milestone 1. Continuity run completed, identify model alternatives and issues

- Review continuity run results and approve continuity model
- Consider methods and configuration options for base model
- Recommend assessment methods (i.e., model classifications and packages) to pursue for base model consideration
- Identify likely issues to be addressed and evaluated in developing the base model
- Review and finalize any data changes or modifications since the DW

Milestone 2. Base model approved

- Review base model alternatives and recommend base model approach and configuration
- Recommend sensitivities and uncertainty evaluations
- Recommend projection approaches and configuration
- Address any additional issues related to the model and approach as necessary

Milestone 3. Assessment model complete; final review and approval

- Review sensitivity and uncertainty evaluations
- Review projection results
- Review assessment report and responses to TORs

IV. Product: Stock assessment report section of the overall SEDAR assessment report.

No change is suggested to this component.