

## **SEDAR Research Track Implementation Minor Modifications – Extended Assessment Stage Approach**

This document provides an initial approach for implementing the Research Track process that involves relatively minor changes to the existing benchmark approach. The assessment stage is doubled in length from 3 to 6 months. The expectation to provide management advice following the review workshop is removed, and the Operational Assessment stage added. The suggested timeline is based on the Research Track proposal presented at the September 2016 SEDAR Steering Committee Meeting.

### **Research Track: Stock ID Process - ~ 4.5 months**

- Need to clearly identify process and timeline for determining Stock ID for Research Track assessments
- **Timing:** timing for Stock ID decision should follow the SEDAR Data Best Practices timeline (final decision should be available in advance of the Data Scoping call; ideally ~4-5 months in advance of Data Workshop)
- **Method:** In-person workshop or series of webinars; will be dependent on project, available budget, and if possible, will be decided in advance when developing schedule
- **Process:** The process outlined below is based on feedback received from the SEDAR Steering Committee regarding the Stock ID & Meristics workshop. It is streamlined and simplified somewhat, to provide a potentially more manageable, long-term approach for determining stock ID. Note that some additional options for this step are provided at the end of this document.
- **Recommended Approach**
  1. Stock ID Work Group will develop Stock ID recommendation (via workshop or series of webinars) and document findings in Stock ID Work Group report.
    - a. The Work Group will be similar to those convened for Blueline Tilefish and Gray Snapper.
    - b. Will include SSC & Technical representatives from all Cooperators and Councils likely affected
  2. Independent Peer Review of the Stock ID recommendations, by a panel to include SSC, mgmt. rep, assessment rep, and optional slots for additional expertise.
    - a. Anticipate being held via webinar to control costs
    - b. Panelists shall be independent of those on the Stock ID workgroup.
    - c. Workgroup chair will present findings to this group.
    - d. Need to address biological and management risks within the Charge and TORs.
  3. Science and Management Leadership Call; to be held when a change in Stock ID is recommended that causes a stock to cross Cooperator boundaries; will involve Cooperators, Management (Regional Office), and Science (Science Center) entities; Leadership Group will resolve the discrepancy and provide guidance on the appropriate TORs to provide the necessary and appropriate management parameters

### **Research Track: Data Stage ~ 4.5 months**

- Data Stage in the Research Track will follow the Data Best Practices timeline
  - If not, what should the timeline look like?

- Terminal Year
  - It is acknowledged that the data in the Research Track will not always be the most up-to-date
  - Recommend that a terminal year be established for datasets to ensure a reasonable base line.
    - Consider the Scamp assessment starting in 2018, the terminal year could be 2015
    - Could reduce unexpected outcomes in the Operational assessment
    - Could help ensure data are available for the Operational assessment
  - Datasets with information more recent than the base terminal year will be accepted.
- Data Best Practices timeline represents 'hard deadlines' for the data providers, meaning that they, for the most part, will not be expected to contribute further to the assessment
  - Is there an expectation that data providers will need to go back and reproduce datasets/analyses throughout the Research Track process. e.g., an alternative way of aggregating catch (and thus length and age comps) is considered?
- Final deliverable from the Data Stage is a DW report, similar to current DW report.
  - Data will be summarized through the baseline terminal year of each dataset. Need to ensure there is clear record with justification for each data decision as necessary for review
  - Does the current DW report outline capture the key information that needs to be documented? Should other info be added? Can some info be omitted?
- Working papers and reference documents will continue.

#### **Research Track: Assessment Stage – 6 months**

- Assessment stage of the Research Track will be operationally similar to current 'IPT' approach (e.g. milestone webinars held approximately monthly with informal communication between analysts and Panel members, as necessary)
  - Are the current webinar milestones appropriate (with the exception of any addressing status)
  - Consideration of in-person workshops – timing, topics, justification
- Timeline doubled for model development to approximately 6 months.
  - Is this adequate time, considering that there should not be data delays due to ensuring a recent terminal year?
- Final deliverable from the Assessment Stage will be a report similar to current AW report in terms of documenting the assessment method and uncertainties.
  - The report will not provide status determinations.
  - The report will focus more on factors that influence model performance than specific results.
  - The report will document the models considered and provide justification for the chosen model approach.
  - Working papers can be used to document the details of topics explored during the research track, with recommendations and resolution of alternatives explored in working papers addressed in the AW report.

- The AW Report will include clear and specific recommendations for the data and model approach to be applied in the Operational Assessment.
- Report should address projection methods, considerations and details. Include recommendations for assuming fishery conditions between TY and year 1.

#### **Research Track: Review Stage, 2 months**

- There are limitations on scheduling flexibility that are beyond our control.
  - Per CIE contact: RW month will need to be set 6 months in advance
  - RW dates will need to be set 3 months in advance;
    - Additionally will need to allow time to find available meeting space for workshop (timing for this is largely dependent on workshop location – shorter in Beaufort, longer in Miami or St. Pete.) 3 months lead time may not always be enough to guarantee preferred locations.
- Final deliverable from the Review Stage will be a summary RW report and separate individual CIE reviewer reports
- The RW will not be asked to provide status recommendations
- RW composition and general approach unchanged

#### **Research Track: Final Deliverable**

- The final research track deliverable will be a composite report similar to current SAR – Intro, DW, AW, RW reports merged into final SAR.
- The final SAR deliverable will be disseminated similar to what is done now (e.g. prior to SSC review final SAR distributed via memo to relevant Cooperators & participants and posted to SEDAR website)
  - Dissemination dates are required for the mandated Peer Review Plans.
- Dissemination of the Final SAR will conclude SEDAR's management of the Research Track. (no change from current practices)

#### **Research Track: Post SEDAR Process and SSC Review, 12+ months**

- Administrative record keeping shifts to the Cooperator for post-dissemination activities.
  - SSC comments regarding the RT and how they are implemented in the RT will be documented by the Council-SSC Administrative Record.
  - Councils requested to provide relevant SSC reports to SEDAR for posting with the assessment on the SEDAR website
- Research Track results presented to the SSC by the analytical team, and to the Council if requested (no change from current practices)
- To save time and travel, the SSC review of the RT should include guidance for the Operational assessment.
  - Should the analytical team be allowed to begin addressing model issues or improvements prior to the SSC Review of the Research Track?
    - For example, sometimes reviewers make recommendations based on hypotheticals that do not pan out. The SSC could resolve such issues and recommend whether such recommendations should be carried forth to the OA...evaluate if the change did what a reviewer thought it might?

- The ability to do this may be determined by the timeline between the RT and the SSC review. However, if this is considered useful the time can be provided.
- After analytical team incorporates reviewer and SSC comments, is it necessary to have some level of review before the Operational Assessment proceeds?

### **Operational Assessment**

- What level of support is expected from SEDAR staff (e.g. develop ToR, schedule/deadlines, etc)? Will role be dependent on how much additional work needs to be done per reviewer and SSC comments/feedback (e.g. continuum between current Standard and Update support)?
- Who determines whether Operational assessment will be conducted more similar to current Standard or Update assessment? What are the relevant considerations? Should the SSC make recommendations?
- Do Operational Assessments need to always have the most recent data? Will all datasets need to be updated and/or will it be specified in the ToR?

### **Example Research Track Timeline Dec 2016 – May 2018 (~18 months)**

- **Stock ID: Dec 2016 – mid April 2017 (~4.5 months)**
  - Stock ID Data Scoping - Work Group Report completion: Dec 2016 - mid-Feb 2017
  - Stock ID Review Process: mid-Feb 2017 – mid-April 2017
- **Data Stage: May 2017 – mid Sept 2017 (~4.5 months)**
  - Data Scoping Call through DW report completion
  - Following the SEDAR Data Best Practices timeline
  - Target terminal year: 2015
- **Assessment Stage: mid October 2017 – March 2018 (~6 months)**
  - Pre-Assessment Webinar through AW report completion
  - Assessment development time doubled
- **Review Stage: April 2018 – May 2018 (~2 months)**
  - Distribution of Reviewer Materials through RW report completion
- **Final Research Track SAR dissemination: early June 2018**
  - Concludes SEDAR role
- **Operational Assessment Completed**
  - September 2018 for a 2017 Terminal year.