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Proposed SEDAR Changes, continuing the discussion

SEFSC Staff

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Where did we leave off?

- The SEFSC proposed to take responsibility for the assessment component of the SEDAR process for which it is the lead analytic agency.
 - Data and Review components will remain unchanged though the details need to be fleshed out.
 - For the Council Cooperators, the lead analytic agency would present an assessment development “check-in” to the SSC. This presentation will highlight key decision points, and the SSC will be asked for feedback prior to the completion of the assessment.
 - Cooperators could appoint a Technical Team with the relevant scientific expertise and fishing experience who would be available to provide feedback as needed during model development.

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Where did we leave off?

- Committee members were supportive of this proposed approach and believe that these modifications will be well received by the technical bodies.
 - By allowing the lead analytic agency to develop the assessment without the need for assessment webinars, this will shorten the time it takes to complete the assessment.
 - The Commissions will continue to operate as they have been, with SEDAR coordinating review workshops as needed.

Changing workforce at the SEFSC

Lost all of the following:

Sustainable Fisheries Division Director (Branch Chiefs and John Walter are sharing the workload)

Two leads in the Highly Migratory Species Branch

Ability to backfill one lead in the Atlantic Fisheries Branch

One lead in the Caribbean Branch

Our internal assessment coordinator

Half the ageing staff

Half the port samplers

Data providers in our Fisheries Statistics Division, including our Recreational Data Manager

Staff working on advanced tech and surveys

Clarifying the details

- What will the SEDAR process look like now?
- Which species need to be assessed through the SEDAR process, and which may be better served through an alternative approach outside of SEDAR? (Key stocks revisited)
- How will the scheduling work with SEDAR and non-SEDAR projects being requested by Cooperators?
- What does the technical team look like?
- How will the SSC function to review internal products?
- When to start implementing the changes?

Procedural Details



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Proposal for SEDAR Projects for SAFMC, GPMC and CFMC

- The full SEDAR process will be limited to those assessments with sufficient new information to require external participation/review. (complex)
- Update assessments and interim assessment approaches would be ***conducted internally by the SEFSC*** and reviewed by the SSC. (simple)

How to determine complexity?

- The specifics of each project will be negotiated between the Center and Council Staff with input from the SSC/Council. A Council may elect to prepare a statement of work or communicate informally.
- The schedule will be finalized based on the number and complexity of the assessments requested.
 - Consider both the SEFSC Calendar and the SEDAR calendar during scheduling.

For all SEDAR projects:

- SEDAR will organize a data scoping call and the **data workshop/webinar(s)**. The public is encouraged to participate where appropriate.
- If there are **TWGs**, SEDAR will coordinate decision-making webinars and scoping calls.
- The Center will develop the assessment internally, and will coordinate ad-hoc meetings with members of the **Technical Team** as needed. The Center will provide a record of these communications for inclusion in the assessment report. Ad-hoc meetings could focus on technical issues, or on stakeholder input/outreach.
- The role of the SSC in model development will be expanded. Council Staff will schedule a pre-decisional briefing(s) with the SSC to provide feedback on key decision points. The Center will revise the assessment as appropriate.
- If there is an external review, SEDAR will coordinate the review process as usual.

Purple indicates items that need to be discussed further

Proposal for SEDAR Projects for SAFMC, GPMC and CFMC

- **Optional Components:**

- In-person Data Workshop - appropriate for new assessments, when many new data inputs must be considered, or when there is a need to substantially modify an existing assessment
- Data Webinar(s) - appropriate when limited new information is available. These would function similarly to a Topical Working Group
- Topical Working Group(s) - used as a focused panel to review specific data or modeling changes that the SSC is not confident it can review.
- External CIE Review - appropriate for new assessments, when many new data inputs must be considered, or when there is a need to substantially modify an existing assessment
- SSC Review - appropriate when limited new information is available and for all updates/interim assessments conducted extra-SEDAR

Proposal for Internal Projects for SAFMC, GPMC and CFMC

- When no optional components are needed for an assessment, the lead analytic agency develops the assessment without input from an external Assessment Panel or **Topical Working Group**.
- No noticed SEDAR-led workshops or webinars will streamline the process.
- A **Technical Team** with the relevant expertise would be available to provide feedback as needed during model development.
- SSC feedback prior to completion of the assessment are available through coordination with Council Staff.



Internal Collaborations on Assessments

- The SEFSC has started a Stock Assessment Forum to aid our lead analysts in getting feedback for their assessments from other analysts across the Center.
- This will formalize a concept we've used at a smaller scale where analysts meet with colleagues to review their models during development.
- For internally-conducted assessments, this Forum will be invaluable in producing the most accurate and appropriate model for the data possible.



Extra-SEDAR assessments

- Update “lites” - To provide the most up-to-date management advice, the Center may update a recent assessment using all the available information, but some time-series may not be available through the terminal year. Provides new SDCs, OFL, ABCs etc.
- Updated projections - Re-run projections, and replace assumed removals with observed information. Retain SDCs, updated OFL and ABC.
- Interim assessment approaches - generally a DLM approach to adjust the existing ABC (e.g. using a reliable index). Retain SDCs.
- Management Procedures - an approved (e.g. MSE simulation tested) approach to manage a stock based on a model-based or empirical harvest control rule or strategy. Does not provide SDCs. Often provides short term catch advice (e.g. ABC).
- **The use of any of these approaches to inform management would be subject to SSC feedback and review.**



What will the Technical Teams look like?

- The Councils may establish a standing Technical Team with diverse scientific expertise and/or fishing experience as appropriate for their needs and the logistics to which they must adhere.
- The team should be available for ad hoc meetings with lead analysts to provide feedback about specific issues.
- This team may be a standing group that covers multiple assessments or may be developed for a specific stock or group of stocks (e.g., tilefishes or mackerel).
- The lead analytic agency may reach out to members of the team as needed, either as individuals or as the whole.
- Technical Teams may not be needed/consulted for all assessments.

When to start?

- For the South Atlantic
 - Gag in 2026
- For the Gulf
 - SEDAR 100 (Gray Triggerfish) now
 - SEDAR 99 (King Mackerel)
 - Pull Tilefish and the Vermilion assessment outside of SEDAR
- For the Commission
 - Cobia will remain unchanged
- Caribbean and HMS are covered in later slides.

SEFSC recommendations

- Suggest sparing use of Data Workshops
 - High workload will create a trade off between Center throughput and participation of stakeholders
- Suggest sparing use of TWGs
 - They should focus on very specific issues and have an endpoint.
 - The participants should be chosen to participate in the process who will assist in developing a solution to a problem
- Assessment Panels and TWGs should not be a pass/fail decision-making body
 - It's a collaborative process rather than a review body.

SEFSC recommendations cont'd.

- We are moving towards data provision processes that will allow for more update 'lites'
 - May include more automated data sets such as catch and indices to extend the terminal year of existing assessments.
- We will need more support to conduct hybrid meetings, as our funding and approval for travel is uncertain into the future.
- We recommend the code of conduct and rules of engagement be reviewed at the start of each public meeting.

CFMC - specific project

Alternative assessment methods:

- The goal is to provide some guidance for the 95% of species in our Tier 4 (expert opinion/PSA guidance based upon percentage of the mean landings over some benchmark years).
- Every species has an ACL, but given additional guidance (e.g., indicators based upon an index of abundance from the NCRMP dive survey, some fishing mortality based indicator, etc.), we want to investigate whether those ACLs are reasonable.
- Need to determine the data availability and match it to a method that will provide what managers need.



HMS - specific approach

- The assessments for sharks need to be revisited, including the Hammerhead assessment(s).
- We propose using an MSE to test management procedures and right-size the assessment models to the data.
- MSEs are not carried out within SEDAR, so we are proposing to take HMS Sharks external to SEDAR for the time being



Feedback/Questions?



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Other topics



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Updating MRIP data in 2026

- It was suggested that a group be assembled to discuss how the results of the pilot study will be incorporated into the assessments, both those which have been assessed through SEDAR but not updated to FES, and those which are not on the SEDAR schedule.
- For those updated to FES, we've developed three options:
 - Option 1: most timely - just use average adjustment factor for monitoring (no assessment runs)
 - Option 2: re-run model with only updated FES data
 - Option 3: a full, update lite model re-run with update to other data sources (based on availability)

Choosing an approach...

- We would like feedback about when these updates for species may be requested, and which option is most likely.
 - E.g. Red Snapper, Gray Triggerfish, and King Mackerel in the Gulf using Option 2. Other species will be done as their assessments are updated.

