Fisheries Dependent Data Collections Working Group (FDDC WG)

In July, 2013 the Greater Atlantic Regional Office (GARFO) and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) formed a Fisheries Dependent Data Collections Working Group (FDDC WG). The charter of the WG is to ensure that all of our data collection, data quality control/assurance and correction, and data management functions are executed with optimum efficiency, consistency, and with full consideration of managers' and users' interests and needs. Both GARFO and NEFSC have responsibilities to collect, manage and analyze fishery-dependent data, and both rely on the data for their critical functions. The scope of the WG's interests will include all fishery dependent data collections and monitoring and the management, quality control and assurance, correction, and delivery of such data. Additionally, the WG meetings will be a forum for considering the effect new management initiatives may have on FDDC and data management. The WG will provide advice to inform the Agency's position regarding such initiatives, our ability to support them, and the associated likely risks and timing of implementation.

Additionally, NEFSC and GARFO have embarked on a joint project to scope out the future of fishery dependent data collections. This visioning project includes information gathered about existing fishery dependent data systems, uses, and the needs from internal and external stakeholders and this information will be considered when making recommendations to improved fishery dependent data system that meets the needs of users within the Northeast.

Attachment: FDDC WG Terms of Reference and Detailed Process Description

Proposal for a Joint NERO/NEFSC Working Group to Address Shared Fishery-Dependent Data Collections, Management, and Use

The Northeast Regional Office and Northeast Fisheries Science Center each have responsibilities to collect, manage and analyze fishery-dependent data, and both rely on the data for their critical functions. For this process, fishery-dependent collection programs include:

- Pre-trip notifications
- Vessel trip reports, submitted by paper and electronically
- Seafood dealer reports
- Biological Data from Port Sampling
- Observer reports and at-sea monitor reports
- Vessel monitoring system
- Groundfish sector reports
- Catch-share transfer requests and transaction reports
- Fishery-specific catch reports, including Integrated Voice Reporting
- Exempted fishery permit reports
- Marine recreational information program
- Vessel, operator and dealer permits

In order to ensure that all of our data collection, data quality control/assurance and correction, and data management functions are executed with optimum efficiency, consistency, and with full consideration of managers' and users' interests and needs, we will form a joint NERO/NEFSC working group.

Name: Fishery-Dependent Data Collections Working Group (FDDC WG)

Terms of reference.

1. The scope of the FDDC WG's interests will include all fishery dependent data collections and monitoring and the management, quality control and assurance, correction, and delivery of such data. The charge will be to improve our efficiency, consistency, correctness, data quality and timeliness of delivery, with full consideration of users' interests and needs.
2. Additionally, the WG meetings will be a forum for considering the effect new management initiatives may have on FDDC and data management. The WG will provide advice to inform the Agency's position regarding such initiatives, our ability to support them, and the associated likely risks and timing of implementation.
3. Functional responsibilities within the WG's scope will be clearly delineated. The WG will strive to the highest levels of data quality and efficiency and will minimize overlapping responsibilities and duplication of effort.
4. The chairs will strive to ensure that each issue brought to the WG for discussion/consideration is evaluated thoroughly and fairly with respect to all requirements and uses of the data and databases. Through improved communications, WG members will better know how one another's projects and problem-solving are affecting other parts of the system.

5. The WG will vet and approve changes to the FDDC and associated data systems before such changes are made.
6. The WG chairs will promote a one system concept and will expect all WG members and staff to adopt a one system concept. The NEFSC and NERO are equally and jointly responsible for the optimal performance of the FDDC and associated data systems. There are no such things as NEFSC problems or NERO problems. The one system concept requires each of us to appreciate the constraints and challenges faced by the other and, in our shared interest in optimal performance, share in their resolution.

Members.

1. The Deputy Science Director and Deputy Regional Administrator will serve as co-chairs of the WG. They will remain in those roles until the WG's functions are well established, and then only by their mutual consent, may they cede the duty to other staff members.
2. The co-chairs will assign their respective staff to the WG. Members will include NEFSC and NERO technical experts in the use, collection, QA/QC, correction, and management of the data.
3. The Deputy Science Director and Deputy Regional Administrator will determine whether to update the performance plans of members to reflect their service on the WG.
4. The key to success of the WG will be consistency of membership and process. While there may be substitutions and some changes to membership as new issues emerge, it is vital that all of the engaged work groups are represented by well-informed staff at every meeting.
5. The co-chairs will request that the Office of Law Enforcement to assign a VMS specialist to the WG.
6. As needed, outside experts may be invited to participate in the WG or join it. These may include, for example, representatives from the Councils or ASMFC.

Process.

1. Initially, regular meetings will be every three weeks, though the frequency may be adjusted later to align with the pace of the work. The WG will meet on a set schedule (e.g., every third Wednesday at 10:00 a.m.).
2. Members will give the WG high priority when setting their schedules. Membership and participation should be noted in performance plans.
3. The co-chairs will appoint staff to coordinate the meeting details and agenda.
4. Frequent meetings will make meeting administration difficult, so the co-chairs and staff will seek to streamline the meeting process.
5. The NERO and NEFSC will each assign a rapporteurs who will collaborate in preparing meeting reports. Meeting reports will be due within three working days of the meeting and will clearly highlight decisions and action items.
6. The WG will meet in person at least twice a year, and by webinar, conference call, or video-conference at other times.
7. The co-chairs will assign a staff member who will be responsible for tracking WG tasks, coordinating across divisional lines, and reporting out on accomplishment.
8. Staff to staff communication between meetings is highly encouraged, but the full WG needs to be kept informed of significant developments affecting the FDDC, data archives, and all associated operations.
9. Additional process rules may be added to this list upon the mutual agreement of the co-chairs.

10. The members of the WG and the co-chairs will assess the progress and effectiveness of the WG after six months and annually thereafter to determine how its function can be improved.

Outcomes and first phase work products.

1. An organizational directory of all of the staff involved in FDDC and their functions/duties.
2. An analysis of that directory to determine whether functional gaps or overlaps exist and a plan of action for resolving the same.
3. A mutually accessible compilation of FDDC process instructions and maps.
4. A prioritized list of action items.
5. Simple business rules for the efficient function of the WG.
6. Improved communications between NERO, NEFSC and OLE staff who work on FDDC.
7. Improved sense of shared responsibility for the success of the whole enterprise.
8. Improved operational efficiency.
9. A forum and proactive process for considering and controlling changes to the FDDC stemming from management actions contemplated by the Councils and within the agency.
10. Recommendations about system attributes and requirements for the next generation of fishery dependent data systems.