Additional Topics, Issues, and Questions to Address when Considering the Potential Redevelopment of the Mid-Atlantic Council RSA Program

January 2022

At the January 18, 2022 Research Steering Committee (Committee) meeting, the Committee will review draft RSA goals and objectives and use a decision tree to help identify draft strawmen answers to core RSA questions that would help shape a potential future RSA program, if supported by the Council. The decision tree questions focus on higher priority issues and topics, but there are a suite of additional ancillary considerations and decisions the Committee and other RSA partners (e.g., ASMFC, GARFO etc.) will need to address in the future should the Council redevelop the RSA program.

Below is a list, by broad category, of additional topics, issues, and questions that have been raised by the Committee, panelists, participants, and the public during the three RSA scoping workshops held throughout 2021. The Committee does not need to specifically answer these during the January 18th meeting (or even the February workshop) but are provided here for future reference and tracking.

Research

Project Proposal Evaluation
- Proposals
    - Require pre-proposals or full proposals only
- Review Criteria
    - What information should be included on proposals: communication plans, past PI grant performance and application (if applicable), plans to address identified challenges, and provides needed economic information to evaluate project value and return-on-investment
- Review and Conflict of Interest (COI)
    - Council develops a COI policy for proposal review or use the Grants.gov review process to address COI
    - Who would/could serve as proposal reviewers: Council members, SSC, AP, FMAT

Research Needs
- Determining RSA research priorities
    - Who would identify/recommend priorities: RSC, SSC, Committees, AP

     o   Use the 5-year research priorities document, Strategic Plan, Implementation Plan, or other sources to identify priorities

Project Results and Performance

- Review of completed project and results
  - Require review of completed project by SSC, MC, FMAT, staff to evaluate application to management
  - SSC develop suite of data factors to determine potential project value
- Dissemination of results
  - Develop Council Communication and Outreach policy
  - Establish regularly scheduled outreach workshop/webinars to present results; PI presentation to appropriate MC; PI and industry collaborators conduct outreach opportunities

Funding

Funding Mechanism
- Considerations under bilateral agreements
  - Fixed price or fixed percentage of market value
  - Limits on the number of participants, buyers, vessels
  - Negotiated price of quota sold or split of proceeds
- Considerations under an auction
  - Fixed lot sizes, separate auctions for commercial and recreational sectors
  - Payment in full or some set percentage at time of quota purchase

Participation and Administration
- Administration costs and considerations for an auction
  - Fixed(%) overhead, auction participants pay flat fee or scaling fee (e.g., based on vessel size)
  - Independent 3rd party to run auction – ability to establish guidelines and protocols by which this 3rd party operates
    - Minimum data collected: size of quota lots and awards, initial and final bid prices, total number of auction participants, vessel information for awarded bidders
- Limits (min/max) to the number of vessels and/or participants per project or by pounds awarded; limits to frequency of participation
- Develop or require a Council communication and engagement guidance document to promote science community and industry collaboration

Enforcement/Administration

Enforcement

- Dockside
    - Establish RSA-specific trip limits (by sector) for each species
    - Port agent verification of landings
    - Vessels (commercial and for-hire) required to carry federal EFP and state exemption permit
        - Federal EFP lists vessel RSA quota allocation by species
            - Running tally of quota landed
    - RSA catch must be landed whole
- Notification
    - For-hire vessels need to notify enforcement of potential delays and/or changes to schedule prior to docking

Monitoring and Administration
- Reporting and monitoring
    - All participating vessels report electronically through an approved system
    - Submission of final report within some specified time period (e.g., 24 hours) following RSA trip with required information (e.g., exact landing amount, trip/report ID number, port of landing, dealer)
    - Special receipt or ticket for passengers on for-hire RSA trip
    - Detailed trip-level for-hire reports including information on passengers and fish landed
    - Access to both state and federal reporting systems to cross-check and validate landings
        - Require all RSA landings to be reported directly to ACCSP
- Support
    - Request ability to use of JEA funds to support RSA enforcement
    - Percentage of revenue raised/surcharge is allocated to administrative support through 3rd party
    - Develop guidance document for consistent/compatible permitting, monitoring, and enforcement across jurisdiction/states
- Accountability
    - RSA overages are deducted, by species, from following year RSA quota; RSA overages only deducted if ABC is exceeded; RSA overages applied to specific state and/or vessel in following year
- Miscellaneous
    - Addressing future changes/considerations to RSA program (i.e., making things frameworkable)
    - Role of researcher in tracking down funds, enforcement of regulations, access to landing reports