



Fisheries Forum Council Support Workshop Services and Planning Process

September 2017

1. Overview

1.1 About the Fisheries Forum

The Fisheries Leadership & Sustainability Forum (Fisheries Forum) is a small, policy-neutral organization that supports the federal fisheries management community by working directly with the regional fishery management councils and NOAA Fisheries. We help create opportunities for problem solving and discussion in support of the council process, and provide a neutral interface among councils and their management partners and stakeholders. The Fisheries Forum brings valuable convening and facilitation capacity to a wide range of timely regional and national topics. Our portfolio of projects includes the following.

- Annual **forums**: meetings hosted by the Fisheries Forum that convene council members and staff from across regions to explore high priority topics
- Projects initiated by request from the management community
 - **Council support**: working with individual councils on specific topics and challenges
 - **Collaborations and special projects**: working in partnership with NOAA Fisheries, other management bodies, and external partners on collaborative projects

The Fisheries Forum's work is funded through core support from philanthropic foundations, supplemented by projects with councils, NOAA Fisheries, and other partners on a contract basis. The Fisheries Forum is able to collaborate with a wide range of partners on projects that align with our mission of policy-neutral support.

1.2 Council support

The Fisheries Forum's council support portfolio includes a range of substantive and process-level support. Council support projects often include short (1-3 day) workshops supported by a single council or in collaboration with additional management partners or external organizations. Councils often host workshops as a strategy for supporting in-depth discussion of issues, questions, concerns, and ideas. Workshops provide councils with the flexibility to engage in open discussion and gain traction on challenging topics without the pressure of reaching consensus or making decisions. Workshops have the additional benefit of fostering collaboration and communication among managers, scientists, and stakeholders.

This document provides an overview of the process for planning a [council workshop](#), including the components involved in developing a project proposal and estimate for services. For additional questions please contact Fisheries Forum co-directors Katie Latanich (katie.latanich@duke.edu) and Kim Gordon (kim.gordon@duke.edu). Information about the Fisheries Forum's past projects can be found on our website, www.fisheriesforum.org.

2. Council support workshops

2.1 General workshop planning

Supporting councils in developing and executing workshops involves customizing a process to address a specific need. We work closely with councils to develop and refine a detailed scope of work for each project. We encourage councils to reflect on the following questions and considerations when enlisting our services to support a workshop.

2.1.1 Workshop purpose

→ What is the primary question, challenge, or need your Council hopes to address? How can a workshop help your Council make progress? What kind of conversation are you hoping to have?

The Fisheries Forum is able to design and facilitate a wide variety of conversations. Workshops typically support one or more of the following purposes.

- Education and information sharing: Build awareness and understanding of an issue, concept, or management tool.
 - *Example: Explore the tools available for addressing data-poor stocks (Caribbean Data-Poor Management Workshop, February 2011)*
- Strategy and policy development: Support a structured exploration of an issue to make progress toward developing management approaches and/or council policies.
 - *Example: Advance the development and articulation of a comprehensive risk policy (New England Fishery Management Council Risk Policy Workshop, March 2013)*
- Investigation and exploration: Explore a new idea, strategy, challenge, or question to build capacity and establish a shared frame of reference.
 - *Example: Discuss potential governance challenges arising from climate-related changes (East Coast Climate Change and Fisheries Governance Workshop, March 2014)*
- Problem-solving and idea generating: Develop ideas and solutions for addressing a challenge or improving a management program.
 - *Example: Reflect on the implementation of the Pacific Groundfish Quota Program and identify strategies and changes to help meet stakeholder and program goals. (Pacific Groundfish Quota Program Workshop, February 2016)*
- Exploring perspectives: Share perspectives, experiences, and different points of view.
 - *Example: Discuss concerns about the consequences of inshore scallop fishing pressure and support constructive and open dialogue between all users of the resource. (New England Inshore Scallop Fishing Workshop, February 2016)*

As a policy-neutral organization, the Fisheries Forum does not engage in mediation or attempt to achieve consensus on recommendations, decisions, or next steps. Depending on the workshop purpose, council leadership and/or executive directors often play an important role in setting the workshop context and achieving a “handoff” from workshop discussions to council follow-up discussions or tasks.

2.1.2 Workshop participation

→ Who should attend the workshop, and why? What size workshop is most conducive to a productive conversation? What roles, perspectives, and areas of expertise are valuable to include given the workshop's purpose?

Participants are the workshop "ingredients" that combine to support a successful and constructive discussion. The Fisheries Forum's past council workshops have ranged in size from approximately 40 to more than 150 participants. Groups invited or requested to participate in council workshops typically include a combination of the following.

- Council members and staff
- Advisory Panel members
- Scientific and Statistical Committee members
- Technical and plan team members
- NOAA Fisheries staff (e.g. leadership, legal counsel, science center and regional office staff with topic or program-specific expertise)
- Management partners (e.g., states, interstate commissions)
- Stakeholders and groups (e.g., commercial, recreational, environmental, seafood industry)
- External experts (e.g., academic, private sector)
- General public

Council-sponsored workshops are typically noticed in the Federal Register and are open to the public.

2.1.3 Workshop logistics and structure

→ How long should the workshop be? When should it be held? What discussion formats are important to include?

The Fisheries Forum's past council workshops have followed a variety of formats. The following factors are most important to consider.

- Length: Most workshops are 1-3 days. Meetings may be staggered over multiple days (e.g., an afternoon session followed by a morning session the following day) to facilitate travel or provide a break.
- Timing: Workshops may be a standalone meeting or held in conjunction with a regularly scheduled council meeting to facilitate participation and reduce travel costs. (A workshop held in conjunction with a council meeting may be considered separate, or formally convened as part of the council meeting.)
- Format: Workshops typically include a combination of discussion formats including presentations/Q&A, panel discussions, large group discussions, and small group breakouts.
- Role of public participation: The role of public participants varies depending on the workshop purpose and objectives. For some workshops public attendees may be welcomed as observers, and for others the public may be encouraged or invited to attend as active participants. (We recommend setting up an advance registration process.)

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

To support effective workshop collaborations, the Fisheries Forum works with councils to develop a clear and efficient division of responsibilities between Fisheries Forum and council staff. Specific responsibilities are agreed upon during the proposal process. In general, the responsibilities are shared as follows.

Fisheries Forum responsibilities

- Lead and coordinate workshop planning process (typically through regular planning calls with planning bodies and/or council leadership and staff)
- Articulate workshop goals, objectives, and topical focus
- Conduct scoping, research, and outreach to frame the issue and identify discussion opportunities
- Develop and refine agenda
- Develop facilitation strategies
- Facilitate meeting discussions
- Support meeting follow-up tasks (e.g., identify discussion themes)

Council staff responsibilities

- Establish workshop purpose and desired outcomes
- Determine workshop planning process (e.g., involvement of council staff and leadership, role of steering committees or planning bodies, outreach to participants)
- Provide feedback and direction on workshop goals, discussion topics and agenda
- Manage meeting logistics (e.g., location and venue, timing, length, participation, notetaking, participant travel)
- Coordinate meeting correspondence (e.g., invitations, announcements, website, Federal Register notices)

2.3 Planning and proposal development

In response to each project request, the Fisheries Forum develops a detailed scope of work to estimate the time commitment and cost of services involved. A typical council workshop involves most or all of the following planning phases and tasks. Costs vary in response to the size and scope of the workshop. The following outline is a generalization based on past experience; specific project planning phases and tasks are customized to meet the needs of each project. Estimates of the proportion of total project time allocated to each planning phase are also provided.

Please note that councils are responsible for travel expenses for Fisheries Forum staff to attend and facilitate workshops.

Initial workshop planning (10%)

- Work with council leadership and staff to understand workshop context and purpose
- Confirm workplan and logistical needs and responsibilities
- Review relevant background documents
- Establish workshop steering committee if applicable and/or primary points of contact

Workshop planning and agenda development (40%)

- Conduct planning discussions (e.g., lead steering committee conference calls)
- Develop, refine and prioritize workshop objectives
- Address key planning questions related to workshop purpose, participation, and logistics (as outlined in Section 2.1.1)
- Identify opportunities for productive discussion and information sharing by engaging in scoping, research, and outreach (e.g. conversations with managers, stakeholders, other councils, scientific experts)
- Translate discussion opportunities into draft agenda; develop and refine agenda with input from council staff, leadership, and/or steering committee

Facilitation and final workshop planning (20%)

- Develop detailed facilitation strategies and discussion questions
- Assist invited speakers in preparing and focusing presentations
- Coordinate final workshop responsibilities as needed (e.g., work with council staff to finalize logistical needs, work with council leadership to establish responsibilities such as opening/closing remarks)

Workshop execution (20%)

- Facilitate workshop discussions to achieve workshop objectives
- Manage workshop timing and transitions as needed (e.g., introducing speakers, moderating Q&A, timekeeping)
- Adapt facilitation strategies and workshop format as needed to ensure productive outcomes (e.g., provide recaps of previous day's conversations; coordinate with council leadership on final discussions or final remarks)

Workshop follow-up (10%)

The Fisheries Forum is able to provide a range of follow-up products and services by request. Due to limited staff capacity we generally do not draft full workshop summaries. The most cost-effective and versatile approach is to develop an informal memo to share with council staff including questions, ideas, and themes of discussion that can be used to support a white paper, short summary, staff briefing, or other outputs as needed.