

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
Scientific and Statistical Committee  
Job Description

*Revised March 2022*

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) is the South Atlantic Council's primary technical advisory body. SSC's are charged in the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) with developing, evaluating, and peer reviewing all technical aspects of Council documents. SSC are expected to provide a broad suite of technical recommendations related to all aspects of the Council's management program, including addressing biological, social, economic, and environmental aspects. SSC's also play a role in stock assessment development and review; in the Southeast region this responsibility is handled through the Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) process.

**I. SSC Responsibilities**

***SSC Charges Stated in the Reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act***

1. Assist in the development, collection, evaluation, and peer review of such statistical, biological, economic, social, and other scientific information as is relevant to such Council's development and amendment of any fishery management plan.
2. Provide to the Council ongoing scientific advice for fishery management decisions, including recommendations for acceptable biological catch, preventing overfishing, maximum sustainable yield, achieving rebuilding targets, reports on stock status and health, bycatch, ecosystem and habitat status, social and economic impacts of management measures, and sustainability of fishing practices.
3. Provide fishing level recommendations for use by the Council in developing annual catch limits.
4. Assist the council in developing multi-year research priorities for fisheries, fisheries interactions, habitats, and other areas of research that are necessary for management purposes.

***SSC Charges Stated in the SEDAR Guidelines***

1. Participate in SEDAR workshops

2. Fill dedicated SEDAR workshop positions
3. Assist in presenting SEDAR assessments to the full SSC
4. Provide Peer Review for SEDAR research track, operational, and benchmark assessment processes.

***SSC Charges Stated in the SAMFC SSC Operating Procedures***

1. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) shall provide expert scientific and technical advice to the Council on the development of fishery management policy, on establishing the goals and objectives of fishery management plans (FMP) or amendments, and on the preparation of such plans or amendments.
2. When requested by the Council, the SSC shall supply the Council with a critical review of the scientific information necessary to make management decisions, such as stock assessments or other reports on stock status, socioeconomic impacts of management measures, sustainability of fishing practices, and habitat and ecosystem status. Such information may include fishing level recommendations including OFL and ABC, where appropriate, based on the best scientific information available.
3. The SSC shall assist the Council in the development, collection, and evaluation of such statistical, biological, economic, social, and other scientific information as is relevant to the Council's development and amendment of any FMP and specification of annual catch limits.
4. The SSC shall assist the Council in determining what statistical, biological, economic, social, or other scientific information is needed for the development of an FMP or amendment that meets the requirements of the MSA; and shall advise the Council as to the best way of obtaining this information, including identifying entities with ongoing research programs that may be able to develop the needed information.
5. The SSC shall advise the Council on preparing comments on any FMP or amendments prepared by the Secretary or Secretary's delegate or other Councils which are transmitted to the Council pursuant to the MSA.
6. The SSC shall comment on, if requested by the Council, any proposed regulations which the Council deems necessary to implement any FMP or any amendment to an FMP that is prepared by the Council.
7. The SSC shall assist the Council in establishing criteria for judging FMP effectiveness.
8. The SSC shall submit to the Council such reports as the Committee deems appropriate and such reports as are requested by the Council.

9. The SSC shall perform such other necessary and appropriate duties as may be requested by the Council to carry out its functions under the MSA.

## **II. Meetings and Activities to Fulfill Responsibilities and Objectives**

### ***SSC Meetings***

The SSC meets in-person twice per year, usually in April and October. Most in-person SSC meetings will be held in Charleston SC, typically beginning on Tuesday morning and adjourning Thursday afternoon. Additional webinar meetings may be held to address Council requests as needed. Meeting time is devoted to presentation of materials, discussion of issues, making recommendations, and preparation of a written report for submission to the Council. The Council expects a final written report within two weeks of the conclusion of each SSC meeting.

### ***Ad-Hoc and Subcommittee Meetings***

The SSC occasionally convenes topical subcommittees or *ad-hoc* committees to address specific issues. Such committees conduct their business in the most efficient and convenient means available, which may include email strings, conference calls, webinars, and meetings. SSC members will be asked to volunteer for these committees.

### ***SEDAR Workshops***

The SSC is expected to play a major role in stock assessment development and review. This role is facilitated and supported by the SEDAR process, specifically developed to increase scientist and constituent involvement in stock assessments. SSC members are expected to volunteer to participate in SEDAR workshops. An SSC member will serve as chair of SEDAR review panels and up to three SSC members may be appointed as reviewers.

### ***Technical committees***

Council technical committees organized around individual FMPs increase the workforce available for SEDAR assessment tasks, develop supporting documentation and preliminary evaluations for SSC tasks such as providing fishing level recommendations required under the MSA, and producing SAFE reports. SSC members are encouraged to also participate in technical committees that are within their realm of experience and expertise.

### **III. Council Expectations Regarding Meeting Deliberations**

1. The SSC shall operate under consensus rather than formal voting. Consensus statements should be developed that provide the Council guidance on the full range of alternatives and that address uncertainties related to recommendations.
2. SSC recommendations shall be based on science and scientific principles.
3. SSC members shall maintain appropriate professional standards at all times when representing the Council, whether at an SSC meeting or other Council-supported activity. SSC members should be aware of the broader audience interested in their deliberations, and that SSC meetings are public meetings and broadcast via the internet. Off the cuff remarks and inappropriate language should be avoided.
4. Personal attacks will not be tolerated. The Council recognizes that advancement in science is often preceded by disagreement and therefore encourages spirited discourse. However, professionalism must be upheld and those who descend into personal attacks or intimidation may be removed from the Committee.
5. All members are expected to participate in the Committee's discussions and to development of the workshop report.
6. Members are expected to provide constructive suggestions and alternative solutions; criticisms should be followed with recommendations and solutions.

### **IV. Membership and Appointment Policies**

#### ***Membership Composition***

1. The SSC of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council shall be appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the Council.
2. The SSC shall be composed of experts in the biological, statistical, economic, social, and other relevant disciplines from the Federal, State, and private scientific communities and whatever other source the Council deems appropriate. Members appointed by the Council to the scientific and statistical committee shall be federal employees, state employees, academicians, or independent experts who are not employed by nor receive any compensation from advocacy or interest groups and shall have strong scientific or technical credentials and experience.
3. The SSC shall be composed of 19 members; Council may add additional seats as need and resources allow.

4. The SSC shall include among its membership a representative of each state agency represented on the Council.
5. The SSC shall include among its membership at least one social scientist, one economist and one additional representative from either of these specialties.
6. The SSC shall elect a chair and vice-chair from among its members to serve terms of 2 years or until a successor is elected. SSC members that are employed by NMFS cannot serve as chair or vice-chair of the SSC.
7. A Social-Economic Panel composed of SSC and/or non-SSC members will serve as a sub-panel of the SSC to address social and economic issues related to council actions and develop advice and recommendations related to social and economic analyses presented to the Council. This panel will be chaired by a Panel member who is also an SSC member, elected from among its members. The Socio-Economic Panel will report its findings to the SSC and will develop guidance for consideration by the Council and SSC.

#### ***Terms of Members***

1. Members of the SSC shall be appointed for 3-year terms by the Council.
2. Membership terms shall be staggered, with 1/3 of the terms ending annually.
3. Membership terms begin on July 1 of each year.
4. Non-SSC members of the SEP will serve 5-year terms.

#### ***Termination of Membership***

*An SSC member may be replaced at the Council's discretion if:*

1. They transfer employment or move to a different location.
2. They are absent from two consecutive meetings without giving adequate notification or reason to the Council Executive Director.
3. They appear unable or unwilling to fulfill their obligations as an SSC member.
4. Their area of expertise is no longer required.
5. The Council determines they should be removed for just cause (e.g., violation of marine resource law and felony conviction, etc.; these examples are not all inclusive).

#### ***Appointment/Replacement of Members***

*Annual Appointment Process:*

1. SSC members whose term will expire shall be notified by the Executive Director and invited to reapply if interested. Members will be asked to submit a current resume and cover letter indicating their desire to continue service.

2. The Executive Director shall announce the annual appointment process through the news media, Council mailing lists, NOAA Fisheries mailings and other such means deemed appropriate to solicit qualified nominees. Interested persons will be requested to provide a resume, completed financial disclosure form, cover letter highlighting their qualifications and indicating receipt of the SAFMC SSC Job Description and other supporting material relative to their qualifications and area of expertise.
3. The Scientific and Statistical Selection Committee will review the qualifications of the existing members seeking reappointment as well as any new nominees and make recommendations for appointments to the SSC to the Council. The Scientific and Statistical Selection Committee may consult with SSC members prior to making recommendations to the Council.
4. Applications for those not receiving appointments will be kept on file until the next appointment period.

*When vacancies occur on the SSC due to resignation or Council action removing a member:*

1. Vacancies will be filled at the next scheduled Council meeting.
2. Vacancies of state agency designated seats will be filled by a representative of that agency; vacancies of designated expertise seats (sociologist or economist) will be filled by an applicant with similar expertise.
3. Vacancies of other seats will be filled from the pool of applicants on hand at the time the vacancy occurs.