

## **Guidance for Developing EBFM Road Map Implementation Plans** **September 15, 2017**

This document provides guidance for development of regional and headquarters Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) Road Map Implementation Plans. As described in the May 2016 Policy, EBFM will help NMFS meet sustainable fisheries goals under multiple mandates by more holistically considering social, economic, and biological trade-offs across fisheries.

### **BACKGROUND:**

There are six Guiding Principles articulated in the [NMFS EBFM Policy](#) released May 2016:

1. Implement ecosystem-level planning
2. Advance our understanding of ecosystem processes
3. Prioritize vulnerabilities and risks of ecosystems and their components
4. Explore and address trade-offs within an ecosystem
5. Incorporate ecosystem considerations into management advice
6. Maintain resilient ecosystems

The EBFM [Road Map](#) (released November 2016) provides options for implementing each of the above Guiding Principles as short, mid and long-term actions<sup>1</sup>. The Road Map (Section 1.4) calls for the development of regional and Atlantic Highly Migratory Species EBFM implementation plans (regional plans) to identify and coordinate priority EBFM milestones across NMFS science and management programs and the Councils. In addition to the regional and HMS implementation plans, this guidance also directs HQ offices to coordinate on the development of a headquarters implementation plan to identify national-level priority actions that complement and support regional priorities. The EBFM Road Map (Section 2.1.a) also calls for the development of national and regional engagement strategies, and this guidance integrates the engagement strategies into the regional and headquarters implementation plans.

Each region has a unique combination of ecosystem conditions, challenges, capabilities, priorities, and information needs to consider when developing implementation plans. In addition, there are initiatives already being implemented (e.g. Stock Assessment and Habitat Assessment Improvement Plans, NMFS Climate Science Strategy, Bycatch Reduction Strategy, Integrated Ecosystem Assessments, Fisheries and the Environment Program, NMFS Science Program Review action items, and Fisheries Ecosystem Plans) that support actions identified in the EBFM Road Map. An action planner that matches these ongoing initiatives with the actions outlined in the Road Map is [available](#) as a resource to streamline the development of implementation plan actions.

### **PURPOSE OF IMPLEMENTATION PLANS:**

1. Coordinate regional science and management EBFM priorities that support sustainable fisheries management by choosing appropriate Road Map actions and describing applicable milestones over the next 5 years.
2. Build collaborative relationships among the regions, centers, and Councils to ensure alignment in

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<sup>1</sup> The Road Map provides the following explanation of short, medium and long-term actions. “Short-term” actions are ongoing or already planned and either are or will be funded from existing resources. “Medium (mid) and Long-Term” actions are needed to fully implement this Road Map, but may not yet be completely funded and therefore not immediately implementable.

achieving EBFM priorities.

3. Describe engagement strategies that will increase awareness, partnerships, and support for these priority actions with stakeholders.
4. Provide a method to document progress implementing EBFM through annual reviews and updates.

#### CONTENT:

1. Regional Context (brief summary, 1-2 pages):
  - a. Description of current approaches to EBFM within the region, including geographic scope of those efforts, links to ongoing projects supporting EBFM, and how current EBFM efforts support fisheries management needs in the region.
  - b. Long-term vision for and benefits of EBFM in the region.
  - c. Key partners.
2. Expected outcomes and benefits. Articulation of the overall expected outcomes and benefits for fisheries management resulting from the successful implementation of the actions and milestones identified in the regional implementation plan.
3. For each Guiding Principle:
  - a. Choose appropriate Road Map actions and describe applicable milestones for the next five years (through 2022),
    - i. Use Appendix A as a template.
    - ii. Assume existing resources are available to support efforts and draw from existing initiatives as much as possible.
    - iii. Identify a target completion date and POC for each action and milestone(s).
  - b. Describe the rationale for selecting EBFM Road Map actions, including how the selected actions build on ongoing activities, adapt past approaches, and support and benefit fisheries management priorities and decisions.
4. Engagement Strategy.
  - a. Identify key partners and stakeholders critical to the success of the implementation plan.
  - b. Identify actions and milestones to facilitate coordination among NMFS and the Councils and the participation of partners and stakeholders in the implementation of the plan.

#### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Regional implementation teams comprised of regional and center experts (including the appropriate EBFM Workgroup members), and a staff representative from the appropriate regional Council(s) will coordinate on development of each regional implementation plan.
- A headquarters implementation plan team, comprised of staff from the offices of Habitat Conservation, Protected Resources, Science and Technology, and Sustainable Fisheries, and including the EBFM Workgroup members from these offices, will coordinate on development of the headquarters implementation plan.
- Draft regional and headquarters implementation plans will be available for public input following formal review by regional and HQ leadership and the CCC, however the regional and headquarters teams may also choose to engage key regional partners during the development of the implementation plans to inform content and priorities, promote partnerships, and build support.

#### TIMELINE:

- September 2017 – Regional and headquarters plan teams identified, including outreach to Councils to solicit representatives to participate in regional and headquarters teams

- October - December 2017 – Draft implementation plans developed.
- January 2018 – Discussion/Presentation of draft regional and headquarters implementation plans with EBFM workgroup and Council staff representatives from the regional teams.
- February – March 2018 – Revisions to implementation plans based on EBFM Workgroup/Council staff feedback.
- March – April 2018 – Regional Leadership (RA, SD, Council ED/Executive Committee) review of draft regional plans and headquarters plan review by HQ Office Directors, NMFS Regulatory and Science Boards, and Council EDs.
- April 2018 – Update and review of draft plans by NMFS Leadership (AA, DAARP, Chief Scientist).
- May 2018 – Draft plans/status briefing to Council Coordination Committee.
- June - August 2018 – Draft implementation plans presented for full Council review and made available for public comment.
- September - October 2018 – Revision of regional and headquarters implementation plans based on input.
- November 2018 – Review of final plans by Regional Leadership (RA, SD, and Council ED/Executive Committee) and headquarters plan review by HQ Office Directors, NMFS Leadership Council, and CCC.
- December 2018 – Review, approval, and public release of final plans by HQ leadership.