

Concepts and Questions for the Next Phase of the Climate and Communities Initiative

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Introduction and Purpose of Document

Following the creation of a draft scenario framework in a January 2020 workshop, the next step is to use the scenarios to generate ideas about how to effectively plan and prepare for the future. The proposal is to use a ‘focal group’ process to elicit ideas from a series of conversations with a range of stakeholders. Each discussion might focus on a particular species, geographic location, fishing community, or fishery management plan.

This report contains a series of suggestions from the meeting facilitator about the potential structure of these conversations, which would inform the next phase of the Council’s scenario planning initiative. These concepts are intended as a starting point for advisory bodies and the Council to develop recommendations on this next phase. As part of these deliberations, advisory bodies and the Council should consider these two key questions:

- Which groups, constituencies, and/or communities should be asked to participate in the focal groups?
- Where should any meetings be held, recognizing that resources could constrain number of meetings and locations?

Proposed Nature of the Conversations

In the Focal Groups, we will use the scenarios as a platform for conversations about the future. The sessions will begin by describing the work completed to date:

- Brief explanation of the overall process and how this [specific] focal group fits (this will also be explained in an invitation and to accompany any pre-reading)
- Introduce the concept of scenarios and scenario planning and its application to climate/ocean change and other forces creating future uncertainty
- Present the scenario framework / story summaries created in January and validated in February/March
- Pay particular attention to those factors that are ‘pre-determined,’ i.e. most likely to happen in all futures that we can imagine.

After groups have reviewed the scenarios, the session should address a series of implications / options questions to elicit views about relevant challenges, opportunities and actions. For each scenario, questions such as the following could be included:

- What relevant issues / developments could you imagine playing out in the next 20 years in this scenario?
- What elements could you add to this overall scenario theme to make it more plausible, relevant and memorable?
- Bad News / Challenges: What are some specific challenges that this scenario would pose for [species / community / function] and why?
- Good news / Opportunities: What are some specific opportunities that this scenario would pose for [species / community / function] and why?
- If you knew that this scenario was destined to be the future in 20 years, what would be the smart thing for (i) fishermen, (ii) communities, (iii) fishery managers to do now?
 - Alternative: if you knew that this scenario was destined to be the future in 20 years, what would you do now to prepare? What would you want others to do to support you in such preparation?
- If this scenario was a future that you did not want to see happen, what actions should be taken today to minimize the danger of this future? By whom?
- If this scenario was a preferred future, what actions should be taken today to increase the likelihood of it happening? By whom?
- Paint a picture of a successful fishing community in this scenario.
- Paint a picture of a successful fishing industry in this scenario.
- What would be an effective approach to fisheries management under this scenario? How would that be different from today?

Another, more active approach is to prompt thinking by creating a small number of specific “what if?” contingencies that seem to emblematic of a particular scenario. (I.e. in an extreme event / low abundance world, imagine a significant die-off of a key local species. What would you do? How would you cope?)

Depending on the number of participants at any given Focal Group session, these questions could be asked concurrently (different groups deal with different scenarios) or sequentially (the same group deals with each scenario in turn).

In either case, the conversations should then look across the scenarios to identify any suggestions or solutions that make sense for all/most futures.

- Do any ideas work under all the scenarios? (we call these robust implications)
- Are there any ideas that will prevent the worst-case scenarios?
- Are there any ideas that will contribute to achieving a common vision for this [group / community / FMP]
- What ideas allow us to be as flexible as possible under continuing uncertainty?

The ideas generated in these scenario conversations can then inform discussions about priorities, prompted by questions such as:

- What does this analysis tell us about any priority initiatives or changes that are needed?
- What should be top of mind for fisheries management?

There is no shortage of questions that can be asked and discussed in focal group conversations. Depending on the number of participants, these sessions could be designed to run between 3-8 hours, seeking an appropriate balance to maximize input while not over-burdening participants.