PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR THE PFMC RESEARCH AND DATA NEEDS (RDN) FIVE-YEAR-UPDATE CYCLE

The Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) requires that Councils develop "multi-year research priorities for fisheries, fisheries interactions, habitats, and other areas of research that are necessary for management purposes". This includes research to support fishery management plans and associated regulations for fisheries requiring conservation and management to prevent overfishing, rebuild depleted fish stocks, and ensure sustainable fishing practices.

Governed by COP 12: Update and Communication of Research and Data Needs

Purpose and Need

    Develop an effective process to identify research and data needs aligned to address current challenges of the Council and communicate them to organizations who may be able to support those objectives.
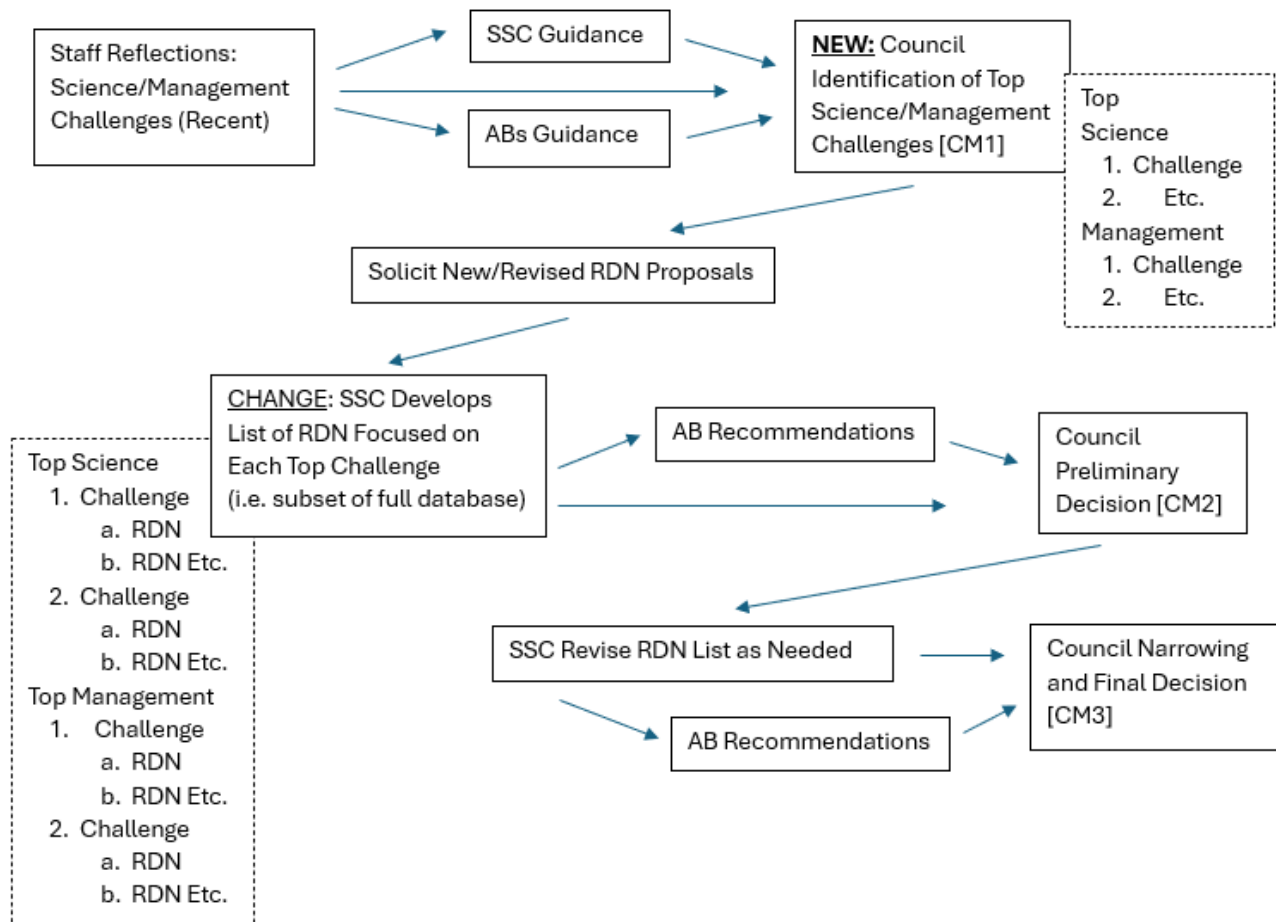
Proposed Framework

Figure 1. Proposed structure for the research and data needs (RDN) process each review cycle.

Identify the most current Council priorities to relate which research and data needs can best address those.

This would require a three Council meeting (CM) process:
Identify top challenges ~ November 2024 (CM1),
Preliminary Action RDN ~ April 2025 (CM2),
Final Action RDN ~ June 2025 (CM3).

1. Council Relevance (update each RDN review cycle)
Identify the most current Council priorities to relate which research and data needs can best address those.
   1a. What are the top management challenges?
   1b. What are the top science challenges?
   - Council level: These could be categorized as the top (*5 or less?*) of each management or science category and cover the range of Fishery Management Plans (FMPs).
   - Advisory Bodies: Initially, top challenges could be identified for each FMP.
   - Likely overlap in the management/science challenges (e.g. top sardine assessment and management challenge might be the presence of multiple stocks), but two categories give the Management Team/Advisory Subpanel an area of focus for their expertise (management) and allows the Scientific and Statistical Committee to structure the RDN recommendations into the broader picture.

2. Proposed Solution to Challenges: Identify which of the research and data needs best address those challenges (*ideally 10 or less for each challenge?*). This can include how they relate to National Standards, address science gaps and improvements, and how workshops can be used to support them.

3. Potential options for Prioritization: The Council could prioritize the top (*range 8-12?*) RDNs across all challenges, prioritize the RDN proposals within each challenge, or the exercise of both identifying a challenge and identifying proposals which best address each challenge could essentially represent the act of prioritization (from the larger number of proposals in the [entire RDN database](#) [DB]).

Step 1: Identify top management/science challenges [November 2024 CM1]
Conduct the exercise to identify the top management and science challenges, through the Council process.

   1a. What are the top management challenges?
   1b. What are the top science challenges?

This would require an Agenda Item with AB/MTs providing statements. Note some AB/MTs are scheduled to meet remotely, and pre-webinars would also be ideal outreach to provide time for consideration. SSC feedback is particularly important in identifying the science challenges.

The Agenda Item would require the Council to provide guidance or have a motion to adopt a challenges list to task the SSC for the next meeting to match RDN proposals (new or existing) to

each challenge, and potentially provide prioritization (i.e. prepare preliminary recommendations).

<u>Step 2: SSC background work to update the current database, [SSC prior to Nov CM1 ideally or shortly after]</u>
SSC Subcommittee (SC) Chairs enter any topics/proposals brought forward in recent stock assessment work, if not already in DB, or resolves/merges them to update existing content in DB. SSC SC Chairs resolve duplicates, tag Habitat research focus, etc. during this exercise. PFMC staff publishes a DB user manual for reference.

Full SSC explores proposed guidelines to select RDN proposals under each identified challenge.

<u>Step 3: SSC develop final evaluation guidelines [SSC during Nov CM1 and/or after in Subcommittee mtgs]</u>
SSC develops proposed guidelines to assist in selecting a narrowed list of recommended RDN proposals for each identified challenge.

After the Nov CM1 with the adopted list of challenges, the SSC (or SC Chairs to Subcommittees to full SSC) evaluates RDN proposals to best address the identified challenges and selects recommendations for each. This could also happen via stages, first email, then public meeting.

The SSC outcome work product, including SSC preliminary recommendations would need to be ready for the Advanced BB (tentative deadline March 19, 2025) for the April 2025 Council meeting Agenda Item.

<u>Step 4: Solicit new proposals [Prior to April 2025 CM2]</u>
Solicit proposals – develop a form for new proposal submissions, consistent with the structure of existing DB.
- This could be advertised to the Council community and the target audience; a link could be included on the PFMC home page and [Research and Data Needs webpage](#).
- The submission form would be designed to structure the proposed RDN to mirror the current structure in the existing database. Each submission could include a short form statement of the RDN, how the information learned would impact Council management and National Standards, justification for why it is urgent/important, and a categorization regarding the type of research.

Outreach to solicit new proposals from the public (could be ABs too) would occur prior to the SSC identifying relevant RDN for the top challenges and making recommendations.

Once submission closes, SSC manages and evaluates new proposals submitted relative to what is currently part of the database and works that into their recommendations at the April 2025 CM.

<u>Step 3: Preliminary List of RDN [April 2025 CM2]</u>
The ABs provide comments/feedback on SSC recommendations in Advanced BB for April CM. Then Council provides input on their preliminary proposals + priorities (at April CM).

<u>Step 4: [Prior to June 2025 CM3]</u>
SSC revisions as needed before final recommendations in June 2025 (Advanced BB tentative deadline 2025).

Step 4: Final List adopted of RDN [June 2025 CM3]
Final action to adopt RDN in June 2025 (Advanced BB tentative deadline 2025).

Proposed Process and Timeline 2024

Timeline moving forward for SSC and Council process in general (YAG).

General flow of review: Identify top management/science challenges @ Council mtg 1; solicit new/revised and SSC conduct selections of proposals to address challenges prior to CM2; @ Council mtg 2 = Council looks at SSC recommendations, AB statements, any public comment; Council decides which selections of AB/SSC/public RDNs to move forward next; @ Council mtg 3 = SSC looks at Council mtg 2 forwarded items and makes final SSC recommendations to Council. Council approves a final package.

Nov 2024 CM1	Identify current top management and science challenges of the Council
Apr 2025 CM2	Full SSC initial RDN recommendations/ranking to Council, AB/public comments – Council takes Preliminary Action
Apr 25 to Jun 25	Feedback on Council preliminary adopted draft RDN
June 2025 CM3	Full SSC provides recommendations to Council, AB/public comments – Council takes Final Action to adopt Final RDN

Final adopted RDNs would be edited or updated in the existing DB for archiving to document the current review cycle process.

Post-Jun 2025 CM	Letter of Transmittal to NMFS with PFMC RDNs