

## PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL STAFF SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON COUNCIL SPECIAL PROJECT 1: ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT AND FLEXIBILITY

[Attachment 1](#) under this agenda item describes a range of potential actions and issues that could inform the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) consideration of a scope for the Adaptive Management and Flexibility project. Given the project timeline and related Council resources, it will likely be necessary to focus on a subset of actions that can reasonably be developed by 2027.

To support the Council's discussion, Council staff have prepared this Supplemental Report, which outlines categories of actions the Council could consider as it provides guidance on developing a Range of Alternatives (ROA) for the project. For ease of reference, the potential actions, tools, and approaches reviewed in Attachment 1 are summarized below. We have also included one additional Cross-Fishery Management Plan (FMP) item here (*Considering Changes to Council Meeting Requirements*) that was not discussed at length in Attachment 1 but was mentioned briefly in Section 1.2.2 of the staff report, *Cross-FMP Challenge #1: Responsiveness to Rapidly Changing Conditions*.

### Cross-FMP Actions and Tools

- **Continuous Improvement Framework:** A structured approach to prioritize actions in need of greater flexibility or responsiveness, select tools for increasing flexibility or responsiveness, and evaluate outcomes.
- **If-Then Statements:** Pre-analyzed, predetermined management responses, coupled with defined triggers that can be implemented rapidly and without a Council meeting.
- **Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) Process Improvements:** Faster and more responsive processes for piloting adaptive fishing gears and methods.
- **Other Procedural Efficiencies:** Avoiding slowdowns during the initial stages of Council actions; expanded use of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) frontloading to facilitate greater coordination between the Council and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and faster implementation timelines; and assessing Council actions for flexibility.
- **Improved Timeliness of Data Streams and Integration of Local and Indigenous Knowledge:** Using indices of abundance or other information to supplement data on stock status; diversifying knowledge systems and capturing signals of change earlier than conventional stock assessments.
- **Considering Changes to Council Meeting Requirements:** Specifying the circumstances and conditions under which the Council may consider reducing the number of meetings required for certain types of actions, for example, depending on scope or complexity.

### FMP-Specific Opportunities

#### **Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS)**

- Continued progress on Science and Management Priorities identified by the Council in April 2025 (currently underway).

- Exploration of pathways to allow for inseason catch accounting of Pacific sardine.
- Improved Council EFP processes focused on flexibility, timeliness, and the collection of fishery-dependent data in the absence of a directed fishery.
- Evaluation and development of new methods to bolster CPS surveys, particularly in nearshore areas.

### **Groundfish**

- Development and application of if-then statements that enable action outside of or between Council meetings.
- Allowing for more inseason actions and possible expansion of the list of routine management measures.
- Continued progress on development and implementation of the Groundfish Harvest Specifications Flexibility action (currently underway).
- Consideration of additional flexibility-focused items from the [2025 Groundfish Workload and New Management Measures](#) list, such as allowing vessels to switch declarations at sea.

### **Highly Migratory Species (HMS)**

- Improved Council EFP processes focused on flexibility, timeliness, and accelerating the development of new gear types and fishing methods (currently underway).
- Using NEPA to frontload future management options and reduce the necessary workload to consider and analyze individual FMP/regulatory changes.

### **Salmon**

- Development and application of if-then statements to enhance flexibility, specifically with respect to preseason modeling forecasts, allowing for timely and appropriate model adaptations when/if needed.

### Categories of Actions

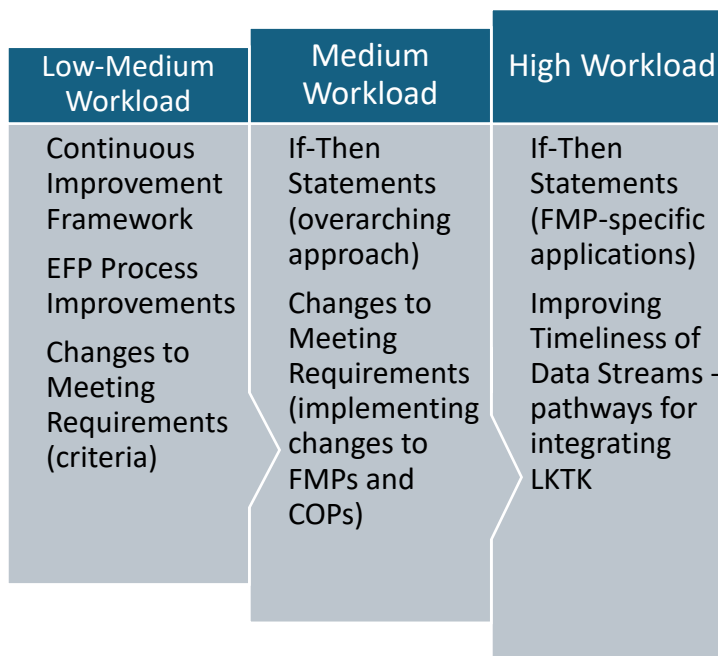
As the Council considers providing guidance on an ROA for the Adaptive Management project, it may be helpful to view the above potential actions and opportunities in the context of near-term, medium-term, or longer-term phases of work. The table below seeks to categorize potential adaptive management and flexibility actions according to their complexity and possible timelines for development, as well as estimated workload. Actions that are already underway via separate Council efforts are not listed here (these include CPS Science and Management Priorities/Pacific sardine stock structure, Groundfish harvest specifications flexibility, and HMS EFP process revisions and improvements; each of these are anticipated to be completed by Spring 2026, based on the Year-at-a-Glance summary shown in [Agenda Item I.4, Attachment 1](#)).

<b>Near-term (6-8 months; by Spring 2026)</b>	<b>Cross-FMP</b>	<b>FMP-Specific</b>	<b>Estimated Workload</b>
Continuous Improvement Framework	✓		Medium
EFP Process Improvements	✓		Medium
<b>Medium-term (8-12 months; by Fall 2026)</b>	<b>Cross-FMP</b>	<b>FMP-Specific</b>	<b>Estimated Workload</b>
If-Then Statements – overarching approach (Elements a-h from Section 4.2)	✓		Medium
Other Procedural Efficiencies - increasing procedural efficiency through frontloading	✓		Medium
Other Procedural Efficiencies - assessing Council actions for flexibility	✓		Medium
Improving Timeliness of Data Streams – pathways for integrating LKTK	✓		High
Improving Timeliness of Data Streams – groundfish scientific sorting requirements		✓	Medium
Considering Changes to Council Meeting Requirements – identifying criteria/conditions for fewer meetings	✓		Low
Considering Changes to Council Meeting Requirements – implementing changes to FMPs and COPs		✓	Medium
CPS – inseason catch accounting of Pacific sardine		✓	Medium
Groundfish – additional items from 2025 Workload and New Management Measures list		✓	Medium
HMS – leveraging NEPA to increase efficiency and flexibility		✓	Medium
<b>Longer-term (12-18 months; by Spring 2027)</b>	<b>Cross-FMP</b>	<b>FMP-Specific</b>	<b>Estimated Workload</b>
If-Then Statements – identifying FMP-specific opportunities		✓	High
Other Procedural Efficiencies – improving procedural efficiency during the initial stages of Council actions	✓		Medium
Improving Timeliness of Data Streams – using indices of stock abundance to supplement stock assessments	✓		High
CPS – new methods to bolster surveys esp. nearshore		✓	High
Groundfish – allowing for more inseason actions + routine management measures		✓	Medium

Potential Approach for Prioritizing and Bundling Actions

As mentioned above and in the Situation Summary for Agenda Item H.1, in order to meet the timeframe of the Adaptive Management project, the Council will likely need to identify a subset of actions to prioritize over the next 18 months. To inform such a prioritization effort, the Council could begin by considering both the cross-FMP impact/value and the feasibility of given actions in the context of timeframes and estimated workload, as summarized in the above table.

For bundling potential actions, the Council may wish to consider an approach that would advance subsets of actions based in part on their complexity, so that a combination of actions with varying estimated resource needs can move forward in an overlapping manner. Below is an example of such an approach, focusing on cross-FMP actions and using the Low, Medium, and High workload categories (and noting that only one action falls into the Low workload category).



We also note that the Council could consider the benefit of addressing some of the process- and efficiency-oriented actions from Attachment 1 under the Council Operations and Priorities effort that is currently underway. Potential actions that may be suitable for consideration as part of Council Operations and Priorities include assessing Council actions for flexibility and improving procedural efficiency during initial stages of Council actions. If taking up some potential actions under Council Operations and Priorities is of interest, further prioritization and refinement may be needed within the Council Operations and Priorities effort to ensure appropriate and timely sequencing of work.

Finally, the Council may wish to use additional or other criteria as it considers providing guidance on an ROA for the Adaptive Management project, including any recommendations brought forward by Advisory Bodies.