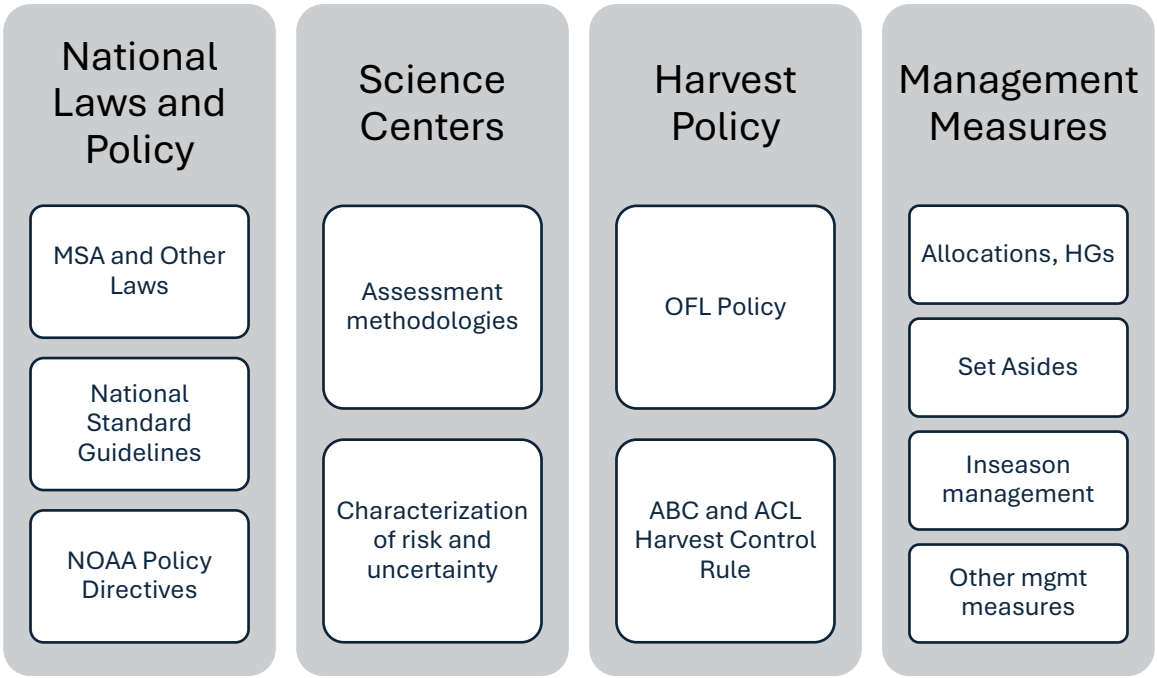
RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK: PATHWAYS FOR INITIAL SCOPING AND IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITIES

Under this agenda item, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is tasked with identifying an initial scope of agenda items and potentially identifying priorities. The materials provided in the Briefing Book include a wide range of items. Some of these items fit well within the Council's realm, while others may be more suited for the Science Centers and others may fit into national policy efforts. Items also vary in their anticipated workload and potential benefits, some of which may not be fully understood until more detailed scoping and analysis are completed.

To assist the Council in their task, Council staff propose a system by which the Council could identify items of interest and a pathway by which those items may be further investigated or developed. Council staff have identified four main categories where action items may fit: National Laws and Policy, Science Centers, Harvest Policy, and Management Measures.



National Laws and Policy

The recent Executive Order (EO) 14430 directs the Secretary of Commerce to review the National Standard (NS) Guidelines and consider revisions to NS1 and NS2 at a minimum. As noted in the Executive Directors report, NMFS has indicated that it plans to release an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) in response to the EO. It will provide both opportunities for the Council to comment at the ANPR and any following proposals. Similarly, NOAA Fisheries announced priorities which also include potential revisions to NS 8 and 9 (Press Release, September 2, 2026). There may also be NOAA Policy Directives (such as the Best Scientific

Information Available or BSIA framework) that the Council may want to provide comments on to the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Within the items described in Attachment 1 and WDFW Report 1 under this agenda item, there are items (for example, the Mixed Stock Exception) that may benefit from the Council commenting on the larger policy considerations prior to making changes to the groundfish fishery management plan (FMP).

Science Centers
As highlighted in Attachment 1, there are items related to risk management (e.g., assessments) that relate to how the Council views and potentially manages risk, but do not fall within the Council's purview but rather the NOAA Science Centers. Some items, such as alternative assessment methodologies, could be identified by the Council as priorities for the Science Centers. Depending on capacity and resources, the Science Centers could bring back information and recommendations to the Council on any recommended items at a future meeting.

Harvest Policy
The harvest policy implemented in the groundfish FMP describes the framework by which stock assessment information is used to develop reference points through a series of sequential steps that takes into account scientific and/or management uncertainty. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recommends the status determination criteria (including overfishing limits or OFLs) to the Council and the Council and its SSC use harvest control rules (HCRs) to establish acceptable biological catches (ABCs) and annual catch limits (ACLs) for managed stocks from the OFL. The Council recommends the framework to NMFS and the Secretary of Commerce who approves its use for management via the FMP.

Items under this category, such as a review of the current harvest framework or updating of proxies, could be taken up under the risk management agenda item on the Year-At-A-Glance. There may be significant workload associated with some of these items and therefore some may be identified as long-term priorities.

Management Measures
Management measures can include a wide variety of items that the Council and its advisory bodies can develop and use to manage opportunity across sectors and across individual participants within a sector. At one end, this includes consideration of the Council's allocation scheme, the use of annual catch targets or harvest guidelines, and how overall opportunity is managed. On the more discrete level, the Council also uses routine measures such as trip limits, bag limits, and area management to manage opportunities to achieve various objectives, both conservation and economic. The Council could recommend development of additional management measures in combination with or separate from the Harvest Policy.