

## Plan Development Teams

Plan Development Teams (PDTs) provide an expanded pool of expertise for the purpose of conducting data analyses and providing information to the Council. The PDTs also help ensure that Council FMPs, amendments and framework adjustments meet scientific, legal and technical requirements for review and approval. The Council's Executive Director appoints all PDT members.

**Responsibilities** The responsibilities of the PDTs are as follows:

- To evaluate management proposals with respect to achieving FMP objectives;
- To incorporate SSC recommendations as accepted by the Council into management alternatives;
- To provide guidance and assistance, as appropriate, to the Council staff in the development and preparation of FMP and amendment submission documents; and
- To provide plan monitoring, and scientific and technical expertise to the Council and its committees and, if appropriate, to the Stock Assessment Workshops.

**Process** The PDT will provide options to meet FMP objectives, analyses and relevant data for use by the appropriate oversight committee or Council. The individual members of the PDT will carry out their usual responsibilities to their parent agencies, but as a group, the PDT is responsible to the Council.

**Terms of Reference** The oversight committee chairs will provide detailed guidance (terms of reference) to the PDTs. Committees may ask PDTs to evaluate management proposals, develop options to meet FMP objectives, or to provide guidance on a variety of scientific, technical or FMP implementation issues. The terms of reference should clearly identify the management objectives against which management proposals should be evaluated and options developed. The goal is to direct the PDTs to develop and/or analyze a variety of options consistent with FMP objectives.

PDT chairs will attend meetings of the relevant committee to facilitate accurate preparation of written terms of reference, and subsequently will present PDT reports and analyses to the committees or the Council. PDT chairs may designate other PDT members to make special presentations to the committees as appropriate.

In meeting the management objectives specified by the committees, PDTs should consider as broad a range of options as possible. All management alternatives shall be consistent with the advice provided by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee.

**PDT Reports** PDTs will provide reports to their respective committees in response to the terms of reference. The PDT reports will contain options and analyses of options that meet specified objectives. PDT conclusions and recommendations will reflect the consensus of its members. PDT members must have the chance to review and comment on PDT reports prior to their distribution.

**Responsibilities** The PDT Chair will schedule meetings as far in advance as possible and coordinate assignments of specific tasks to individuals or subgroups of the PDT. The Chair will distribute all terms of reference prior to PDT meetings.

The PDT Chairs will keep PDT members informed of all Council actions affecting a PDT's area of responsibility. The PDTs may determine whether a particular issue or proposed action warrants their involvement, or whether it is better handled solely by the Council staff.

PDTs are working groups and therefore PDT members are expected to contribute to analyses and documents under development. PDT members are chosen for their scientific and technical capabilities. It is important for them to be as impartial as possible in evaluating management alternatives. To maintain the credibility of the PDT as an impartial body, PDT members should be careful not to become advocates for a particular management approach or a particular interest group.

All FMPs, amendments or major framework adjustments should be developed with the involvement of the PDTs unless otherwise delegated to a committee established for a specific purpose. The PDTs also will review major components of submission documents, such as draft and final environmental impact statements, economic, social and Regulatory Flexibility Analyses for all FMPs, and major amendments or framework adjustments.

To ensure the most efficient use of PDT resources, as much work as possible will be done before or outside of PDT meetings by circulating and reviewing analyses and documents by mail or electronically.

PDT members should have the full agreement of their agency/employer to allow them to make the appropriate commitment to the PDT process. Expected time commitments should be explicit so that PDTs can depend on members for some minimum amount of contribution.

**PDT Meetings** The purpose of PDT meetings is to direct and review analyses and provide guidance to the Council and its committees. Committee chairs may attend PDT meetings to provide guidance and clarification when needed. Council members, industry advisors and members of the public also may attend PDT meetings, but may participate in the discussion only at the invitation of the PDT chair.

The purpose of the Council's PDTs is to perform analytical and other technical work for the Council; therefore, although the meetings are open to the public, they may not always be given public notice.

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**Composition** Each Plan Development Team will consist of the following:

- A Chair designated by the Council's Executive Director.
- Up to two members from the NMFS Regional Office, one of whom is responsible for keeping the Regional Administrator and other appropriate NMFS personnel informed of work undertaken, progress, problems encountered and timetables.
- Up to two members from the NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC). Other scientists from the NEFSC may participate in technical sessions or working subgroups of the PDT. Their involvement would be coordinated by the appropriate NEFSC member.
- Designated staff members from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.
- Economists, statisticians, anthropologists, sociologists, marine biologists or other scientists from state fisheries agencies and academic institutions. Subject to the availability of funds, expenses for PDT members will be reimbursed by the Council.
- Other Council staff as appropriate.
- Representation from different organizations does not need to be proportional, although an effort should be made to include state personnel on Council PDTs.
- Members of Council committees that have the responsibility to task a particular PDT may not serve or stand-in for any member of that PDT.
- Advisory Panel members may not simultaneously serve on any of the Council's PDTs.
- Industry-funded scientists and members and/or staff of non-governmental organizations may be approved for PDT membership on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Committee.