

Final Evaluation for Northeast Consortium Collaborative Research Projects

The Northeast Consortium administers a final evaluation of all appropriate aspects of funded collaborative research projects upon completion. The evaluation of a project is an essential step in the successful transfer of project results and products to appropriate end-users. Following evaluation, Northeast Consortium staff work to ensure that the data, information, and other deliverables are effectively used and integrated into fisheries and ocean management, further research, commercial fishing practices and products, and other practical applications as appropriate.

The Final Evaluation Process

The Northeast Consortium funds research that varies greatly in project topic area, size, duration, and potential impact on fisheries management, thus the final evaluation of each project is unique. A programmatic review is conducted for each project, and most projects also receive an independent technical review.

Programmatic review. The Northeast Consortium staff reviews each project to ensure that project reporting requirements are met and that project funds were spent appropriately as determined by the approved project budget. There is also an analysis of the potential impact of project results to fisheries management or other end-users to determine if an external independent review is appropriate.

Independent technical review. For projects that may have significant impacts on fisheries management or on an end-user community, an independent technical review is facilitated. Project final reports and supporting materials are sent to technical reviewers. Reviewers prepare anonymous reports, providing detailed comments on each of the evaluation criteria, noting specific strengths and weaknesses of the project. Reports should be submitted by reviewers to the Northeast Consortium within **six** weeks of receiving project documentation.

Final technical evaluation reports are not posted on the Northeast Consortium's website, but are available upon request to representatives of end-user communities and organizations. This includes the National Marine Fisheries Service; New England Fishery Management Council; Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission; commercial fishing industry organizations and individuals; the Advisory Committee of the Northeast Consortium; and/or other appropriate local, state, or federal agencies or programs.

Conflict of Interest

The final evaluation is a confidential and impartial process. Conflicts of interest are scrutinized when selecting reviewers, and each reviewer must read and sign the Northeast Consortium's conflict of interest and confidentiality policy prior to completing a review. Reviewers are not identified to project participants or end-users without their prior permission. The Northeast Consortium seeks such permission only as necessary to provide evidence of authority and expertise. Panel members may not copy, quote, discuss or otherwise use materials about projects without the consent of the Northeast Consortium and project participants.

Northeast Consortium

University of New Hampshire

University of Maine

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

Evaluation Criteria

- **Project success:** Did the project accomplish its stated goals and objectives?
- **Certification of results:** Is there adequate description of the experimental design, methods, and data analysis? Were these approaches appropriate? Are the data accurate, precise, and believable? Are the results and conclusions well supported by the data, statistically valid, and contribute to a sound basis for management decisions and policies? If not, can anything be done to allow this?
- **Dissemination of results:** Are the project deliverables (publications, reports, and communications materials) of high quality and understandable to end-users?
- **Project partnerships:** As best can be discerned, was the project of mutual interest to participants and were all partners engaged throughout the course of the project, including project design, data collection and analysis, and application of the results or products? What were the most and least successful aspects of the partnership?
- **Project impacts:** What impacts has the project had or could it have? What are the potential effects on fishing practices; socio-economics; and fisheries, coastal, and ocean management?
- **End-Users:** Who specifically could benefit from knowing about the research (i.e. fishing sector, management organization, working group, or plan development team)?
- **Overall rating.** Rate the overall project according to the criteria listed above as excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor. Explain the reasoning behind the rating.
- **Future research.** Is additional research needed to answer the original questions posed by the project? Are there obvious avenues of further research that should be pursued?
- **Additional remarks.** Provide any further comments not covered in a prior section.

For More Information

Additional information about the Northeast Consortium can be found at its website. For matters relating to the evaluation of collaborative research, contact the Communications and Information Coordinator, Rachel Feeney: 603-862-2276 or rachel.feeney@unh.edu.