

***NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE POLICY DIRECTIVE 37-101
NOVEMBER 9, 2004***

Staffing & Organization

WORKING GROUP INVENTORY

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Type of Issuance: Renewed August 2014

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:

Numerous temporary work groups exist within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) at any given time. These groups represent a significant commitment of Agency resources, both in terms of staff time and other costs (e.g., travel). However, expected outcomes or products from work groups are not always clear or consistently available to NMFS leadership or the work group members. This policy directive establishes the creation of a Working Group Inventory (WGI) to better: (1) track the commitment of staff time to work group projects; and (2) ensure accountability for work group products. The WGI requires each work group to have a Terms of Reference (TOR) and an up-to-date membership list available to all of NMFS leadership. A TOR will describe: the purpose or goal of the group; a summary of objectives; a description of approach and functions (the scope); organization and reporting; funding; and duration.

The WGI will, at any given point in time, document the active working groups in NMFS. For groups chaired by NMFS staff (whether inter-agency or internal only), the chair of each working group will submit a TOR and a membership list of the group to his/her Director. For working groups that involve agencies other than NMFS (including other NOAA line offices) *and* for which NMFS does not chair the group, a formal TOR is not required. However, the primary NMFS office represented on the work group should complete the TOR template with as much of the key information provided as possible, and provide it to leadership, along with a membership list (see Attachment 1 for a definition of "primary NMFS office"). For each working group, Directors will post two files (TOR or summary; membership list) to an internal NMFS intranet, for access by NMFS staff at any time.

This directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities:

A work group chair will write a draft TOR and have it approved by his/her Director before the first meeting of the work group. Within two weeks after the group's first meeting, the chair will finalize the TOR and provide it to the Director. At the same time, the chair will also provide the Director with a list of the group's membership.

For inter-agency work groups for which NMFS is not the chair, the primary NMFS office will provide the Director with a summary of the TOR information and a membership list within two weeks after the group's first meeting.

NMFS Office Directors, Science Directors, and Regional Administrators will be responsible for:

- *NMFS-chaired work groups*: ensuring that the work group chair submits a final TOR and membership list to them within two weeks after the first meeting of the work group.
- *Inter-agency work groups not chaired by NMFS*: ensuring that staff submit a summary of TOR information and a membership list to them within two weeks after the first meeting of the work group.
- Posting the TOR and membership list to an internal NMFS intranet within one week of receipt of the files.

This policy directive is supported by the references and glossary of terms listed in Attachment 1.

William T. Hogarth, Ph.D.
Assistant Administrator
for NOAA Fisheries

Date

Attachment 1
GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

References

NMFS Instruction 37-101-01, *National Marine Fisheries Service Working Group Inventory - Structure and Management*.

Terms

Director - A NMFS Headquarters Office, Regional Office or Science Center Director.

Membership list – A document that contains the full names and reporting office (Science Center, Regional Office or Headquarters Office) or agency (if not NMFS) of each member of the work group. A template is provided in NMFS Instruction 37-101-01.

Primary NMFS office (Headquarters Offices, Regional Offices and Science Centers)–

- When only one NMFS Headquarters Office, Regional Office or Science Center is represented on an inter-agency work group not chaired by NMFS, that office is the primary NMFS office and is responsible for submitting the correct files to the Director. When more than one individual from that entity is on the work group, the most senior staff member is responsible for providing the files.
- When more than one NMFS Headquarters Office, Regional Office or Science Center is represented on an inter-agency work group not chaired by NMFS, the office with the programmatic lead for the subject of the work group is the primary NMFS office, and is responsible for submitting the correct files to the corresponding Director.

Terms of reference (TOR) - A document that contains the following elements describing the work group: the purpose or goal of the group; a summary of objectives; a description of approach and functions (the scope); organization and reporting; funding; and duration. A template with descriptions on each of the elements is included in NMFS Instruction 37-101-01.

Work group - Any group consisting of staff from two or more NMFS Headquarters Offices, Regional Offices, Science Centers or other agencies brought together to accomplish a specific task or produce a specific product. For the purpose of this policy, the definition of a work group does not include standing committees, boards, councils or contact groups, or groups within only one Headquarters Office, Regional Office or Science Center.