

Meeting Summary: MRIP Executive Steering Committee
December 10, 2012; 2:30 to 4:00 EST

Participants: John Boreman, Chair; Gordon Colvin, Bonnie Ponwith, Kitty Simonds, Bob Beal, Randy Fisher, Ken Franke, Ned Cyr, Forbes Darby, Rob Andrews, Dave Van Voorhees, Lauren Dolinger Few, Pres Pate

Operations Team (OT) Report and Project Funding Recommendations: Pres Pate/Rob Andrews

Rob Andrews reported on the Nov. 27-28 OT meeting in Portland, OR. The OT meeting report is appended to this meeting summary. The OT received 16 FY 13 Project proposals (one proposal was forwarded to the IMT) and is recommending approval of 13, several with conditions as outlined in the meeting summary. The recommended list is in priority order, in the event the final budget will not allow for funding of every Project.

ESC members asked about the timing for final project plans and approvals. Rob stated that Project Team Leads for approved Projects would be asked to prepare and submit final Project Plans into the MDMS by late January. Funding is expected by the beginning of the third quarter (April 1).

ESC members also asked about the process for developing responses to the conditions of approval and detailed project budgets for the projects that had not yet developed budgets. Rob responded that these would need to be included in the final Project Plans to be submitted in January and that the OT would need to approve them.

John Boreman asked if there were any objections by ESC members to approval of the OT recommendations for Project approvals. No objections were noted and, therefore, the OT will notify the successful Project Teams and sponsors to proceed with developing their Project Plans.

Information Management Team (IMT) Report: Lauren Dolinger Few

MDMS Briefing: Lauren Dolinger Few reviewed the history and purpose of the MRIP Data Management Standard (MDMS). Login instructions were distributed to the ESC recently and the ESC now has full access. ESC members and participants should contact Lauren directly with any questions or login issues.

Project Funding Recommendations: Lauren briefly summarized the three Projects the IMT is recommending for approval in FY 13, two from HQ and one passed on from the OT. The projects are: MRIP Data Management Standard (MDMS) 3.0; Vessel Directory; and Ocean Recreational Boat Survey (ORBS) Database Improvements (from the OT). The total budget amounts to approximately \$55K in FY13 funds for the ORBS project. The two HQ IMT projects were included in the MRIP support budget that was prepaid with FY12 funds. There was no objection from the ESC members to moving forward with these Projects.

Review/approve NC Pilot and APAIS Design Certification:

John Boreman had forwarded the final Project Report, Peer Reviews, and responses to the reviews, along with the OT recommendation for ESC approval of the report and certification of the intercept survey design, to the ESC on December 3rd with a final deadline for comments by December 14th. John asked the ESC if there were any questions or comments for the Project Team or the OT that could be addressed at this time. He also noted and concurred with the OT's request that the Project Team make some revisions to the final report to more accurately characterize the comparison of estimated catch and precision between the pilot design and the current MRFSS design to better reflect the benefits of using the new methodology to improve accuracy of the estimates. There were no further questions or comments.¹

Status Report, Registry Team: Gordon Colvin

Gordon Colvin reviewed the status of activities of the Registry Team. All states/territories except Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are designated as exempted states and are providing either state registry data (all Atlantic and Gulf coast states) or regional survey data (Pacific coast states and western Pacific territories). The states that are providing registry data are now receiving advanced data quality reports and will need to prepare data quality improvement plans by mid-year. The Interstate Commissions are holding funds previously allocated by MRIP to support state projects for implementation of these plans.

Gordon also noted that the \$15.00 federal registration fee must be reviewed and updated for 2013. The fee is expected to increase somewhat.

Status Report, Communication and Education Team: Forbes Darby

Forbes Darby reported for the Communication and Education Team (CET). Principal activities for the past year included the rollout of the new MRIP estimation method and the 2004-2012 re-estimation for the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, and the "MRIP Road Show" (constituent outreach including meetings with state partners, targeted stakeholders, and recruited focus groups) conducted in New Jersey, Florida, and southern New England. Essential feedback from the Road Show tour includes:

- Recognition that the vast majority of stakeholders are not well informed about the fishery institutions and process, and are not at all knowledgeable about data collection (who, how, why, how used, etc.);
- Affirmation that thoroughly and objectively presented information can usually address the concerns and misunderstandings of stakeholders;
- Recognition that it is essential that MRIP information and education materials address not only how we collect data and produce estimates, but also the larger context in which these and other data are used; and
- Feedback on design of presentation and handout materials.

Following the Road Show trips, the CET developed a suite of new outreach materials including a new standard MRIP Presentation, one pager, and business card handouts. Forbes will send the

web link to the new presentation to the ESC. The presentation will also be posted to the website with narration very soon.

The CET is also planning the communications rollout of the new APAIS for 2013. The new handout materials will be part of that rollout, including materials to be available for our field samplers to give to anglers following the sampling interviews.

Implementation Issues: Gordon Colvin/Dave Van Voorhees

Funding Priorities for Implementation Investment: Gordon Colvin outlined the long-standing MRIP strategy for funding implementation of survey improvements. Generally, MRIP has allocated significant funding in the early years to development of the Registry, and to funding projects that design and pilot test new survey and estimation methods and establish necessary database design and management. As new methods are successfully developed and tested (i.e., have been “certified” and added to the MRIP toolbox), it is intended that available funds will be used to: (1) meet any increased costs for implementing the improved methods; and (2) expand data collection, using the improved methods, to meet regional partners’ need for precision, timeliness, and coverage. Over time, the need for investment in new methods development and testing is expected to diminish and a higher proportion of available funds could be used for implementation. Gordon also reviewed the MRIP Spending History spreadsheet, including the first draft of a FY 13 spend plan, noting that the agency is operating on a Continuing Resolution through March, and will not be able to firm up the spending plan until final appropriations are received. Nonetheless, the spreadsheet could be used to illustrate that MRIP will soon face the need to make decisions on where and how much to invest available implementation dollars. Further, MRIP’s state and regional partners will need to be part of that decision-making process, as well as to make decisions about how to invest any funding available to them from other sources.

Process and Roles for Regional Implementation (Do we need an Implementation Team to work with Regional Partnerships (FINs?): John Boreman reviewed the handout with Key Implementation Issues/Key Questions (attached). The ESC members and participants generally felt that the document identified the issues and questions we need to address and that it is important to address regional implementation decisions this year. Further, they expressed the need to flesh out the issues more fully and to identify the outputs (“what we want to walk away with”) from such a process. The following next steps were agreed to:

- John Boreman will draft a process outline, including purpose and goals, and a candidate list of white papers (suggested topics, assignments) and distribute to the ESC in January;
- The ESC will meet by conference call in late January to discuss the process outline and white paper assignments;
- The ESC will hold an in-person workshop in mid-2013 to complete the process and adopt a strategy for implementation and associated allocation of MRIP funding.

Attachment 1
Operations Team Meeting and Proposal Review
November 27-28, 2013
Portland, OR

Participants: Pres Pate, Rob Andrews, Dave Donaldson, Russell Porter, Cindy Thomson, Dick Brame, Bob Clark, Richard Cody, Mark Fisher, Pat Campfield, Mike Cahall, Jason Didden, Josh Demello, Ron Salz, Gordon Colvin (MRIP Program Manager), Forbes Darby and Scott Ward (Communications and Education Team), Lauren Dolinger Few (Information Management Team)

The MRIP Operations Team met in Portland, OR November 27-28, 2012 to review MRIP proposals and make funding recommendations. The Team received 17 proposals for consideration. One of the proposals, ORBS Database Improvements, was withdrawn by the project team prior to OT evaluation and re-submitted for funding consideration by the MRIP Information Management Team.

The remaining 16 proposals were evaluated, scored and commented on by individual OT members prior to the meeting. Specifically, OT members were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses for each project and score each project from zero (should not be funded) to 10 (best project ever). During the meeting, the OT discussed each project and made a determination as to whether each project should or should not be recommended for funding. The projects that were recommended for funding were prioritized based upon the average scores among all of the OT members.

The Team recommends 13 of the 16 projects for funding, with funding for several of the projects conditional upon follow-up by the project team. Funding recommendations and conditions for funding are provided in Table 1. Projects are listed in priority order, based upon the average scores among all OT members. In the event of insufficient funding to cover the costs of all recommended projects, the OT recommends funding projects at 100% of requested funding levels beginning with the highest priority projects and funding as many projects as the budget permits.

Attachment 2
Key Implementation Issues:

- Decisions on selection of survey and estimation methods:
 - Meeting increased cost requirements for new methods, e.g. new Atlantic/Gulf APAIS and effort survey design. Atlantic and Gulf coasts beginning in 2013. RecFIN probably 2013/2014. Caribbean and Hawaii shortly thereafter.
 - Meeting operational requirements (enforcement, permit requirements and administration, validation, data management) for implementation of methods that go beyond sample surveys (e.g. for-hire logbooks, catch cards or other mandatory angler reporting).
 - Making choices among alternative accepted (“certified”) methods.

- Establishing regional partners’ goals (“standards”) and priorities for improving precision, coverage and timeliness.
 - Deciding on trade-offs among the desired improvements.
 - Meeting the increased costs of desired improvements.
 - Choices available to individual partners (particularly states) and partner responsibilities for funding.

Key Questions:

- What costs should MRIP be responsible for, and what costs should we look to regional partners to contribute?
- Should the ESC establish an “Implementation Team” to manage these issues?
OR: Should ST staff work directly with each FIN with overall guidance from the ESC?
OR: Some other option?
- How do we determine the regional decision-making mechanism and identify, and determine roles of, partners in decision-making?
 - Where there are FINs with a governance mechanism for standard-setting and decision-making, are they the best mechanism?
 - If there is no established FIN-based governance in place, how should we proceed?
 - Standards may need to vary in different sub-regions. Should there be a sub-set of the FIN to set standards in large regions, e.g. the interest of the NRCC in having a strong role in determining standards for the northeast region. Is this only a Northeast/Southeast issue?

ⁱ Update: No further comments or objections to the OT recommendations were received from the ESC as of the December 14 deadline. Accordingly, on December 17, ESC Chair John Boreman conveyed to Ned Cyr, Director of Science and Technology, NMFS, the ESC’s recommendation to approve the Project Report, with modifications as requested, and to certify the new APAIS survey design and an approved MRIP methodology.