

Summary DRAFT action items and performance metrics being considered/vetted for inclusion in NOAA Fisheries Southeast Equity and Environmental Justice (EEJ) Implementation Plan to advance national EEJ goals and objectives

- Green -- seemingly straightforward, primarily related to accessibility
- Yellow -- may need to further consider roles, responsibilities, applicability
- Pink -- adapted from national EEJ strategy
- Blue -- other commonly heard/requested items acknowledged but not addressed in regional EEJ implementation plan (e.g., perceived sector inequities, enforcement)

Objective: Research and Monitoring

Identify underserved communities and their needs, conduct collaborative research, and assess impacts of management decisions.

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
Conduct social science research to identify potential opportunities and challenges aquaculture development may present for underserved and underrepresented communities in the Southeast	Research has been conducted to examine prospective federal waters aquaculture development around the Southeast US with specific regard to potential benefits and challenges of such development for underserved persons and communities	Staff time
Conduct in-depth social science research in collaboration with fishery participants on the full range of challenges involved in contemporary commercial fisheries as undertaken by the underserved	Descriptive analysis of contemporary challenges associated with commercial fishing in the Southeast Region is disseminated to decision-makers and the public	Staff time and travel; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Use well-defined/meaningful spatial scales to assess effects of prospective wind facilities on fishing operations active in Southeast EEZ	The potential physical / displacement effects of offshore wind facilities on local and regional fisheries around the Southeast are described in a Technical Memorandum	Staff time
Conduct secondary source research regarding which and how species that are underutilized domestically are actually used in other nations; examine cultural dimensions of why and how species are or are not used in the US	TBD	Staff time

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
Conduct secondary and primary source research and analysis to examine extent and implications of seafood imports on fleets and fisheries in Southeast	A well-developed assessment of seafood importation on Southeast fisheries is produced, reviewed, and disseminated	Staff time and travel; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Conduct overall assessment of equity in domestic marine fisheries; consider equity from bottom up—from the base of seafood consumers to regional commercial fisheries	A well-developed assessment is produced, reviewed, and disseminated	Staff time
Undertake a representative survey of crew members in the South Atlantic and generate analyses to inform the fishery management process in the Gulf and South Atlantic	Analysis of crew survey data is completed and technical reports are generated to inform fishery management process in the Gulf and South Atlantic	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Fund/conduct research and data synthesis to inform regional fishery management councils and select federal agencies of pre-existing local factors and conditions that should be considered when disasters occur and assistance is being allocated	TBD	Staff time; Funding, translation
Work with underserved fishery participants and key persons in disaster response agencies to identify key challenges and lessons learned related to recent and historic disaster events, including coping strategies. Review and synthesize this information to inform the future trajectory and planning for increased/more effective disaster response; consider the example	An empirically informed fisheries-specific disaster guidance document is produced, reviewed, and disseminated	Staff time; Funding, translation

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
Louisiana Fisheries Community Recovery Coalition hosted by Louisiana Sea Grant.		
Conduct systematic interview work with IFQ participants, with persons who aspire to attain shares, and with program managers to examine challenges involved and solutions developed to address program-related challenges among the underserved	Analysis of IFQ-related challenges is conducted and reviewed based on input provided by representative samples of participants, aspiring participants, and program managers	Staff time and travel; Funding, translation
Research and analyze the interrelated social, cultural, and economic effects of management decisions that allocate or limit allocation of living marine resources among underserved communities in the Southeast	Representative analysis of allocation impacts is produced, reviewed, and disseminated	Staff time
Conduct a situational analysis of marine aquaculture development in the US Caribbean to identify the forms of aquaculture that are ecologically, economically, and socially preferred for the region and explore opportunities for more accessible pathways for authorizing small-scale or time-limited aquaculture activities	Formal assessment of local capacity and limitations of scale in developing offshore aquaculture projects in the Caribbean is completed Results are communicated in each island area where interest in offshore aquaculture has been expressed to government	Staff time and travel; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Research and report on the importance of diversification (multiple commercial fisheries, dual charter/commercial permits, state/federal); include this information in cumulative impact analyses	TBD	Staff time
Research and report on the cumulative socioeconomic impacts of closures; consider the potential relevance of Kate Quigley's socioeconomic Caribbean Closure analysis/model in the Gulf and South Atlantic; present to Gulf and South Atlantic Councils if applicable/appropriate; consider expanding scope of analysis to consider impacts of back-to-back closures and state closures	TBD	Staff time

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
Research socioeconomic impacts of management measures relative to projected impacts to enable adaptation and avoid repeat mistakes	TBD	Staff time
Undertake primary and secondary source research to identify, describe, and analyze "subsistence" fisheries and subsistence-related dimensions of fishing communities in each sub-region of the Southeast	A technical report describing and analyzing subsistence or consumption-motivated pursuit and use of living marine resources in the Southeast region is produced, reviewed, and disseminated	Staff time and travel; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Expand collection of demographic data to aid in identifying all underserved communities that are impacted by or could benefit from our mission-support services	Additional demographic questions are included on regional permit application forms and other data collection forms/processes	Staff time; Funding, translation
Identify marginalized social groups and historic processes that led to such marginalization, along with potential means for improving relationships between marginalized social groups, NOAA Fisheries, regional fishery management councils, and other entities - to include LGBTQ and various minority populations; actively engage Regional Fishery Management Councils in identifying groups that have historically been marginalized from participation in Council processes	<p>Number of social and cultural research projects</p> <p>Number of projects focusing on cultural literacy to effectively and appropriately engage with underserved communities</p> <p>Number of data sources and research projects characterizing underserved communities</p>	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Consider applying method developed by Speir et al. 2020 which leverages a longstanding health survey conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to identify fishing community participants through their direct association with fishing related industries, rather than inferring demographics and fishery participation from a zip code	TBD	Staff time

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
<p>Consider collaborating with states to increase number of states which conduct the “industry and occupation module” within the annual Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey conducted by the CDC to improve the monitoring of fishing community participation, health, and demographics at a very low cost</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, other</p>
<p>Conduct analysis of barriers to entry in fisheries and marine aquaculture programs</p>	<p>Percentage of fisheries programs for which a barrier analysis is conducted</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
<p>Examine barriers and inequities experienced by women involved in or seeking involvement in domestic marine fisheries, and identify potential means for mitigating such challenges</p>	<p>A technical report is developed to examine barriers and challenges among females involved in or seeking involvement in domestic marine fisheries</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, translation</p>
<p>Use secondary source data regarding general rates of illiteracy among persons employed as workers in various industries around the US to help estimate the extent of illiteracy among participants in federal fisheries of the Southeast; conduct focus group research to identify challenges presented by illiteracy and means for alleviating such challenges among regional fishery participants</p>	<p>A technical report is developed to examine the effects of illiteracy among fishery participants in the Southeast and prospective means for addressing related challenges</p>	<p>Staff time and travel; Funding, translation; Funding, other</p>
<p>Partner with select entities that provide addiction and mental health support services to identify potential strategies for alleviating addiction and mental health problems affecting participation in regional fisheries</p>	<p>Number of partnerships initiated with local or regional addiction support agencies</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
<p>Identify needs and interests of underserved communities and align research focus areas accordingly</p>	<p>Number of communications with underserved communities designed to identify research focus areas</p> <p>Number of research priorities influenced by underserved communities</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, translation</p>

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
<p>Promote meaningful involvement of underserved communities throughout the research process. This includes co-developing and co-producing research and monitoring for community characterization and social indicators, fisheries management, climate change, aquaculture, protected species, and habitat protection and restoration. Such co-development and co-production should incorporate IK and proceed consistently with applicable confidentiality of information requirements.</p>	<p>Early engagement of underserved communities to co-produce research and monitoring priorities</p> <p>Involvement of underserved community members in the data collection process</p> <p>Reporting of findings to underserved communities and research contributors</p> <p>% of projects that meaningfully involve underserved community members in planning, fieldwork, reporting</p> <p>Number of research collaborations with historically Black colleges and universities, minority-serving institutions, tribal colleges, and community colleges</p> <p>Underserved community satisfaction with the NOAA Fisheries research and monitoring process</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, training; Funding, translation</p>
<p>Analyze social, cultural, and economic impacts of NOAA Fisheries' services and management decisions (e.g., fisheries management, aquaculture, climate change and habitat conservation) on underserved communities</p>	<p>Number of reports or other documents that integrate social, cultural, and economic impacts to underserved communities</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, training</p>
<p>Include local and indigenous traditional ecological knowledge in fisheries management, protected resources, aquaculture, habitat, climate, and ecosystem-based science, consistent with statutory requirements (e.g., best scientific information available).</p>	<p>Number of projects and products that incorporate IK in their data collection and reporting</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, training; Funding, translation; Funding, other</p>

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
<p>Increase co-production and co-development (e.g., meaningful involvement of fisheries representatives from underserved communities) of stock assessments, research, and monitoring, to the extent consistent with applicable law.</p>	<p>Diversity and number of fisher representatives from underserved communities taking part in stock assessment processes</p> <p>Number of community data workshops</p> <p>Underserved community satisfaction with NOAA Fisheries stock assessment processes</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, training; Funding, translation; Funding, other</p>
<p>Build and share tools and other resources to understand how climate change impacts fisheries, fishing communities, protected resources, habitat, aquaculture, and ecosystems so that communities are prepared and ready to adapt</p>	<p>Number of tools publically shared</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, translation</p>
<p>Address expanding recreational component of marine fisheries in all resource management decisions to facilitate equitability in management decisions that affect both recreational and commercial sectors. Consider equity from the bottom up—from the base of seafood consumers to regional commercial fisheries</p>	<p>N/A (Acknowledge in plan as “level playing field” message we heard – no action items</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Objective: Policies and Plans

Ensure that our policies promote equal opportunities for all and do not create unintended inequities or unequal burdens for underserved communities.

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
<p>Develop regional guidelines to enable fair and equitable provision of offshore aquaculture opportunities among underserved fishery participants who seek alternative forms of ocean employment</p>	<p>Relative percentage of underserved fishery participants receiving MREP-AQ training, aquaculture grants, or other aquaculture-related opportunities</p>	<p>Staff time</p>

Collaborate with state and federal permitting agencies to develop permitting guides for aquaculture projects where applicable	Number of permitting guides developed	Staff time; Funding, translation
Prioritize and fund MREP-AQ to inform and assist prospective aquaculture lease operators, and recruit underserved community participants and liaisons	MREP-AQ is funded and executed; percentage of underserved community participants	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Incorporate national and regional EEJ goals, objectives, and actions where applicable in the next iteration of the Southeast Climate Regional Action Plan (RAP)	Number of national EEJ objectives advanced through RAP 3.0	Staff time; Funding, translation
Incorporate underserved community objectives or criteria into the Cooperative Research Program (e.g., prioritize grants to underserved communities; reserve portion of grants for underserved communities, etc.)	Cooperative research program is revised to promote increased participation of underserved communities	Staff time
Develop and disseminate clear timelines for disbursement of federal fishery disaster relief funds so that fishery participants can plan their recovery strategies	Website and/or other tool is used to communicate available information about the schedule and status of funds appropriated in response to a federal fishery disaster declaration	Staff time; Funding, translation
Collaborate with OSF, grants, and states/territories to explore opportunities for getting appropriated federal fishery disaster relief funds to communities more quickly	TBD	Staff time
Collaborate with OSF and states/territories to promote the equitable distribution of disaster funds among fishers	TBD	Staff time
Collaborate with OSF to consider how the Fishery Disasters Improvement Act of 2022 may be used to increase equity in disaster determination processes	TBD	Staff time
Identify and present to Regional Fishery Management Councils key barriers impeding underserved community access to limited access permits (e.g., eligibility criteria, access to capital); collaborate with RFMCs and FFO to explore and identify potential options for addressing identified barriers	TBD	Staff time and travel; Funding, translation
Identify and present to Gulf Council key equity barriers in the IFQ fisheries as identified by IFQ and EEJ Focus Group participants and other stakeholder input at Council meetings; develop a plan, strategy and schedule for addressing those items that NOAA Fisheries can address independently (e.g.,	TBD	Staff time and travel; Funding, translation

communication, administrative, system, marketplace issues) and collaborating with the Council to identify options to address the remaining structural program/policy issues		
Prioritize development, Secretarial review and (if approved) implementation of the Gulf Council's Amendment 59 to the Reef Fish FMP	TBD	Staff time
Prioritize development, Secretarial review and (if approved) implementation of the Gulf Council's Amendment 60 to the Reef Fish FMP	TBD	Staff time
Explore additional actions SERO/SEFSC can take to address identified IFQ communication, administrative, system, or marketplace issues captured during IFQ Focus Groups and other venues	TBD	Staff time
Review and apply November 2022 White House guidance and implementation memo to develop policy framework for 1) understanding local and traditional ecological knowledge; 2) growing and maintaining the mutually beneficial relationships needed to appropriately collect local and indigenous traditional ecological knowledge; and 3) consider, include, and apply such knowledge in fishery data collection, science, and management, and aquaculture planning and development; incorporate ideas and lessons learned from other regions where applicable.	A local and traditional ecological knowledge policy framework is established for each sub-region	Staff time and travel; Funding, other
Collaborate with observer program to determine if cultural beliefs and norms can be considered when matching observers to vessels, including customs/traditions, gender/privacy issues, and language barriers	TBD	Staff time
Collaborate with observer program to explore the potential to establish a dress code or uniform for fishery observers	TBD	Staff time
Collaborate with observer program to explore the feasibility of 1) transitioning from random selection to a rotational schedule or other approach to address the inequitable burden created by repeat selections; and 2) allowing observers to sign insurance waivers	TBD	Staff time

Collaborate with observer program to develop a one-pager that explains the purpose of the observer program, why data collected on vessels can't or won't be shared with captains, and how the data will be used for science or management	TBD	Staff time
Engage Regional Fishery Management Councils in identifying and addressing barriers and structures that lead to the systemic exclusion of underserved communities; encourage the councils to incorporate EEJ principles into operating procedures, codes of conduct, and daily practice by members, staff, and advisory panels to avoid unintentional creation or perpetuation of barriers to equitable involvement in regional marine fisheries and fisheries management	Council policies and protocols are reviewed and updated as appropriate to ensure harassment prevention, training, and codes of conduct	Staff time
Establish a policy directive focused on optimizing survey implementation in the Southeast through: (a) plain language, (b) concise content, (c) translation to appropriate primary languages, and (d) readily available technical assistance.	Directive established	Staff time
Simplify fishery permit application and renewal processes and provide easy-to-access technical support for use by applicants	Measurable extent of positive feedback from fishery participants completing applications	Staff time; Funding, translation
Engage shrimp stakeholders in characterizing the current state of the shrimp fishery, developing a collective short (2025), medium (2030), and long-term (2050) vision for the fishery, and identifying key challenges impeding the collective vision	X stakeholder workshops conducted Percentage of underserved community members engaged	Staff time and travel; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Work with HQ to develop and execute through the national seafood strategy a shrimp fishery pilot program that aims to work across the federal government (e.g., ITA, FDA, USDA, Seafood Inspection) to achieve the collective short-, medium, and long-term vision for the shrimp fishery	Pilot program is developed and executed Number of issues affecting underserved communities that are addressed	Staff time
Placeholder for any milestones related to Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission "Future of Gulf Seafood Campaign"	TBD	Staff time

Collaborate with HQ to explore how the National Seafood Strategy can address trade and other market issues impacting fishery performance, including through development of local markets for domestic product and domestic seafood campaigns; improved and enforced seafood labeling practices; consumer education; and increased funding and enforcement to combat IUU seafood imports - especially during local harvest closures; consider whether strategies employed by Culebra's Fishing Association pilot initiatives to reduce nutritional insecurity and make local seafood more accessible to underserved communities could or should be expanded to other communities/regions	Number of profit-constraining factors/issues addressed by the National Seafood Strategy in the SE	Staff time
Participate in NOAA Fisheries' Comprehensive Review of its Seafood Import Monitoring Program	TBD	Staff time
Incorporate into regional outreach materials messaging promoting commercial fisheries as a source of employment, food, and other socially beneficial outcomes	Template language developed Number of outreach materials containing this messaging	Staff time
Provide technical assistance to fishery participants when rolling out new technology (e.g., electronic reporting requirements)	Extent of technical assistance available to participants in each sub-region	Staff time; Funding, translation
Work with Fisheries and OLE leadership to identify and address any inequities created by differential enforcement coverage and consequences (e.g., fines, permit revocation) between sectors (commercial/for-hire/private) and jurisdictions (state/federal)	N/A (Include this in plan as "level playing field" message we heard -- no action items)	N/A
Address inequities created by differing reporting requirements by expanding catch reporting requirements for the recreational sector	N/A (Include this in plan as "level playing field" message we heard -- no action items)	N/A
Address inequities created by differing commercial / recreational monitoring requirements	N/A (Include this in plan as "level playing field" message we heard -- no action items)	N/A
Address inequities created by recreational overages	N/A (Include this in plan as "level playing field" message we heard -- no action items)	N/A
Make the information used to manage recreational fisheries as valid, reliable, and useful as that used to manage commercial fisheries	N/A (Include this in plan as "level playing field" message we heard -- no action items)	N/A
Enable equitable reporting of catch by working directly with private recreational constituents	N/A (Include this in plan as "level playing field" message we heard -- no action items)	N/A

Ensure commercial/recreational allocations account for equitable impacts to consumers	N/A (Include this in plan as "level playing field" message we heard -- no action items)	N/A
Require an easy-to-use reporting process for the recreational sector, such as reporting by phone app	N/A (Include this in plan as "level playing field" message we heard -- no action items)	N/A
Address negative socioeconomic impacts of shark conservation measures	N/A (Refer to HMS)	N/A

Objective: Benefits

Ensure that our policies promote equal opportunities for all and do not create unintended inequities or unequal burdens for underserved communities.

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
Recruit women to participate in capacity building work in areas where habitat restoration and climate change resiliency work is most clearly needed	Percentage increase in women contributing to habitat restoration and climate change readiness in the Southeast	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Provide ongoing technical support, including grant-writing seminars, for underserved persons pursuing NMFS opportunities	Documented increase in technical support and grant-writing seminars provided to underserved persons in underserved communities Number of public outreach events advertising this service Number of underserved communities receiving access to technical expertise and subject matter experts	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Make fishery disaster spend plan allocations transparent/public and monitor/track the distribution of funds	TBD	Staff time
Establish a process, schedule, and clear rules for fishery disaster spend plans	TBD	Staff time
Increase state and territorial awareness of the Community Social Vulnerability Indicators (CSVl) Toolbox and other tools that could be used to inform fishery disaster response and relief efforts; train states in the use of this and other tools for that purpose as applicable/appropriate	TBD	Staff time and travel; Funding, other

Provide grants to environmental non-governmental organizations to engage underserved community members in field trips and other recreational opportunities designed to introduce NMFS mission in a hands-on manner	Number of grants provided Number of outreach programs and events that incorporate recreational activities introducing participants to NOAA Fisheries mission	Funding, other
Advance and improve territorial fisheries science and management by increasing funding for data collection, processing, and analysis, and prioritizing enforcement in the region	Percentage increase in funding for enhanced US Caribbean fisheries management and regulatory enforcement capacity Number of stock assessments produced Number of positions funded Number of projects funded	Funding, other
After research is conducted to identify marginalized social groups and the factors that led to their marginalization (Obj 3, row 21), explore the potential to make amends through some form of reparation	NMFS has explored potential means for empowering communities of underserved persons involved in or seeking involvement in federal fisheries	Staff time; Funding, other
Track and report the percentage of grants, experimental fishing permits, marine resource allocations, restoration funds, and other funding and projects going to underserved communities	Tracking and reporting mechanisms developed Tracking and reporting mechanisms used to analyze the allocation of resources to underserved communities	Staff time; PRA clearance
Collaborate with FFO to explore options for increasing underserved community access to capital; for example, tailoring loans/interest rates to economic status/needs	TBD	Staff time
Work across NOAA to develop programs that facilitate the intergenerational transfer of fishing business ownership within underserved communities; this could involve training programs, tax incentives, subsidies or grants to support the transition of family-owned fishing operations to younger family members.	Number of programs developed to enable familial continuity in the fishing industry Percentage of fishing businesses that are maintained by the same families in underserved communities (tough to measure)	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Collaborate with other federal agencies and state and local governments to preserve existing infrastructure and identify suitable locations and funding support for the development of more sustainable, resilient working waterfronts with icehouses, docks, mega cold storage facilities -- run by the people for the people. Site the facilities in underserved communities where possible. Consider incorporating community "evacuation or disaster centers" that can support critical infrastructure needs following disaster events. Evaluate if/how HR 4618 (Supporting Commercial Fishing in Port Infrastructure Projects Act)" can support this work.	TBD	Staff time; Funding, other

Collaborate across NOAA to promote the evaluation of natural resource injuries (including lost human use, as well as social, cultural, and economic benefits) borne by underserved communities, the equitable allocation of restoration projects for those injuries, and effective monitoring to inform needed adaptations	Number of natural resource damage assessment cases with explicit consideration of natural resource and human use losses borne by underserved communities and engagement in restoration planning	Staff time
Collaborate with FFO to explore options for providing underserved communities financial assistance with utilities, docking fees, boat supplies	TBD	Staff time
Collaborate with FFO to explore options for providing underserved communities funding for risk insurance qualifications and entry barriers as they relate to climate change impacts	TBD	Staff time
Identify and address potential barriers and resulting inequities that underserved communities may face when accessing SERO's benefits and services, including agency acquisition and financial assistance opportunities. Work to incorporate EEJ considerations into best practices for designing competitive funding opportunities, recruiting applicants, reviewing applications, selecting recipients, etc.	Number of staff trained to identify and combat unconscious bias in funding decisions Number of grant/funding/contracting program selection criteria reviewed and modified Feedback on accessibility of benefits and services	Staff time; Funding, training; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Prioritize EFH and ESA consultations for energy, port expansion, and other projects that impact resources that are valued by or relied on by underserved communities (e.g. juvenile shrimp or fish in adjacent estuaries, protected resources of cultural or aesthetic value). Consider lessons learned from the blue justice movement for small-scale fisheries (see Farmery et al., 2021; Campbell et al., 2021), in relation to other blue economy sectors being developed in the U.S. Caribbean.	TBD	Staff time
Continue to work with federal partners to prioritize communication and collaboration with underserved communities directly affected by offshore wind energy projects to minimize navigational hazards and user conflicts	TBD	Staff time; Funding, translation
Ensure appropriate data are collected to monitor and address impacts of major infrastructure projects; in particular to identified/known resources valued or relied on by underserved communities	TBD	Staff time
Allow limited by-catch to be used for subsistence purposes	TBD	Staff time

Collaborate with HCBUs and other minority-serving institutions, tribal colleges, the aquaculture industry, fishers, and other underserved community members to develop or support high school technical courses and other vocational training and technical assistance programs in fishing and marine aquaculture, with a focus on underserved community members or other communities where options are limited	Number of vocational programs developed or supported that are accessible to underserved community members Rate of job placement	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Develop or support scholarship, internship, and mentorship opportunities for local residents to train and remain in/contribute to their communities (e.g., USVI to UVI); for example, CTAE vocational fisheries track	Number of scholarships and internships awarded to advance participation of youth in mission-related educational programs Number of paid interns employed from underserved communities	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Incorporate EEJ considerations into decision-making about resource allocations, as data allow and to the extent consistent with applicable law. Considerations could include assessment of impacts and benefits to underserved communities and prioritization of actions that benefit or correct a disparity among communities.	Number of programs that incorporate EEJ into allocation decision-making	Staff time; Funding, training

Objective: Outreach and Engagement

Build relationships with underserved communities to better understand their engagement preferences and improve information sharing with all communities

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
<p>Use information from EEJ focus group discussions, underserved community leaders and liaisons, and NMFS' outreach expertise to develop Division- or program-specific strategies for maximizing the extent and effectiveness of messaging between NOAA Fisheries and underserved communities on prospective and actual regulatory changes. Use culturally sensitive and appropriate messaging and address the full suite of identified barriers (e.g., technological capabilities, illiteracy, language, etc) by employing varied approaches (e.g., social media, mail-outs, text messaging, community newspapers, local television and radio, telephone and in-person communications).</p>	<p>Underserved community-specific communication strategy is developed for regulatory initiatives</p> <p>Number of approaches employed to address identified barriers</p> <p>Number of information products that are designed and distributed for use by underserved persons</p> <p>Underserved community feedback on outreach efforts</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, training; Funding, other</p>

<p>Use information from EEJ focus group discussions, underserved community leaders and liaisons, and NMFS' outreach expertise to develop Division- or program-specific strategies for maximizing the extent and effectiveness of messaging between NOAA Fisheries and underserved communities about opportunities (e.g., grants, aquaculture initiatives, habitat restoration, climate resilience, citizen science projects, MREP, RESTORE Act work, etc.). Use culturally sensitive and appropriate messaging and address the full suite of identified barriers (e.g., technological capabilities, illiteracy, language, etc) by employing varied approaches (e.g., social media, electronic and paper mailings, text messaging, community newspapers, local television and radio, telephone and in-person communications, distinct NOAA Fisheries web page on this topic, opportunity webinars, an "opportunities" section in the Regional Director's Report at Council meetings).</p>	<p>Underserved community-specific communication strategy is developed to share information about opportunities</p> <p>Number of approaches employed to address identified barriers</p> <p>Number of information products that are designed and distributed for use by underserved persons</p> <p>Underserved community feedback on outreach efforts</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, training; Funding, other</p>
<p>Use information from EEJ focus group discussions, underserved community leaders and liaisons, and NMFS' outreach expertise to develop a strategy for maximizing the extent and effectiveness of messaging between NOAA Fisheries and underserved communities about the status, availability, and schedule for federal fishery disaster declarations and assistance and (to the extent possible), the effects of disaster events on underserved communities and infrastructure. Use culturally sensitive and appropriate messaging and address the full suite of identified barriers (e.g., technological capabilities, illiteracy, language, etc) by employing varied approaches (e.g., social media, mail-outs, text messaging, community newspapers, local television and radio, telephone and in-person communications).</p>	<p>Underserved community-specific communication strategy is developed to share information about federal fishery disaster declarations and assistance</p> <p>Number of approaches employed to address identified barriers</p> <p>Number of information products that are designed and distributed for use by underserved persons</p> <p>Underserved community feedback on outreach efforts</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, training; Funding, other</p>
<p>Employ at least one new strategy for addressing illiteracy barriers, such as audio books, videos, or other types of verbal communications (in-person meetings, telephone)</p>	<p>Number of strategies designed and employed to communicate with constituents who do not have reading or writing skills</p> <p>Underserved community feedback on illiteracy outreach strategy</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other</p>
<p>Employ at least one new strategy designed to facilitate more and more meaningful interaction with women and girl stakeholders, including female ethnic minorities, female LGBTQ persons, wives of commercial fishermen, and others</p>	<p>Number of strategies designed and employed to communicate with women and girl stakeholders</p> <p>Women and girl feedback on outreach strategy</p>	<p>Staff-time; Funding, translation</p>

Partner on outreach with select entities that provide addiction and mental health support services to affected persons in fishing-oriented communities	NOAA Fisheries outreach specialists initiate partnerships with local or regional addiction and mental health support agencies	Staff time; Funding, translation
Incorporate plain language requirements into the performance plans of staff who develop or communicate about information products and identify or establish Division-specific POCs to review information products for plain language and readability	<p>Performance plans are modified to include plain language requirements</p> <p>Division-specific POCs are identified at SERO and the SEFSC</p> <p>Underserved community feedback on readability of communications</p>	Staff time; Funding, training
Identify or create multilingual stakeholder liaison(s) at SERO and SEFSC responsible for responding to constituent questions about mission-related activities (e.g., fishery and protected species regulations, permits and permit applications, observers, surveys, open opportunities, contact information for other relevant line offices or partners) with goal of providing one-stop-shop service	<p>One or more one-stop-shop stakeholder liaisons are identified or established for this purpose</p> <p>Underserved community feedback on one-stop-shop efforts</p>	Staff time
Develop template language to incorporate into outreach materials, as appropriate, information that demonstrates to stakeholders that we are listening and we care; for example, information about how their input impacted a regulatory change; what we know about whether established regulations are achieving their purpose and how stakeholders may benefit or be impacted; requests for feedback on how regulations are working and/or needed adaptations	<p>Number of templates developed for use in stakeholder communication and outreach</p> <p>Underserved community feedback on efforts</p>	Staff time; Funding, translation
Collaborate with underserved communities to establish and utilize a system of community liaisons, leveraging the support of existing trusted and knowledgeable liaisons where applicable (e.g., Sea Grant, port agents, field staff, community NGOs), to ensure a strategic, efficient and cost-effective approach to outreach; organize a facilitated workshop between NOAA Fisheries and regional NOAA Sea Grant programs to improve collaboration with the goal of institutionalizing new communication pathways with underserved communities	<p>NMFS-Sea Grant workshop is completed</p> <p>Community liaison plan is established in collaboration with key representatives of underserved communities in each sub-region</p>	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other

<p>Explore the potential for providing space and technical support to local stakeholders who desire to participate in virtual meetings but face accessibility barriers; Identify existing partnerships and/or form new partnerships with other NOAA Line Offices, federal/state/local governments, and community organizations who are able and willing to provide such support in their geographic areas</p>	<p>Number of venues made available to provide fishery participants with space and technical support needed for attendance at virtual meetings</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other</p>
<p>Develop outreach materials describing why NOAA Fisheries' survey-based research is needed, how the work is conducted, and how the information will be used; include those materials with the dissemination of each survey</p>	<p>Survey research with constituents is consistently preceded by adequate explanation of its need, intent, basic methodology, and potential outcomes</p> <p>Underserved community feedback on efforts</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, translation</p>
<p>Establish a contracting mechanism and protocol to support routine translation services at SERO and the SEFSC for scientific, policy, and opportunity messaging. Allocate (and pursue additional) resources for that purpose. Prioritize translation needs during fiscal year activity planning and develop and track FY spend plans for allocated resources.</p>	<p>Percentage increase in management, scientific, and opportunity messages that are communicated in languages other than English</p> <p>Underserved community feedback on effort</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, translation</p>
<p>Utilize the expertise of social scientists in conjunction with the knowledge and wisdom of local leaders and group representatives to bridge the gap between the agency and community through regularly scheduled or planned in-person communications on mission-related issues of mutual interest funded by the relevant regional Division or Program.</p>	<p>Increase in interactions between trained social scientists and representatives of underserved communities</p> <p>Underserved community feedback on effort</p>	<p>Staff time and travel; Funding, translation; Funding, other</p>
<p>Review the reach of current agency outreach efforts and develop strategic plan to ensure each educational level or age group is effectively targeted (elementary, junior high, high school, college, adult) through participation in scheduled events and/or development of additional age-appropriate materials</p>	<p>Development of strategic outreach plan</p> <p>Number of outreach efforts and products developed to introduce NOAA Fisheries mission and discuss local conservation issues</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, other</p>
<p>Proactively identify, notify, and consult members of U.S. Caribbean island communities potentially affected by pending regulatory and policy actions</p>	<p>Number of proactive communications with Caribbean Islanders about pending and potential future regulatory actions</p> <p>Caribbean Islander feedback on efforts</p>	<p>Staff time; Funding, translation</p>

Consider the geographic context in which outreach and engagement is being implemented and develop special effort/strategies to reach constituents who live in rural areas that are distant from Council and other meeting venues	Percentage increase in extent of fisheries outreach and engagement work in rural areas of the Southeast Rural community feedback on efforts	Staff time and travel; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Create educational programs and opportunities, in partnership with NOAA Sea Grant, NOAA Office of Education, external academic institutions, and local NGOs to engage underserved communities in science activities related to NOAA Fisheries' research, conservation, and management mission.	Number of education and community engagement events and products (programs, curricula, and activities) targeting underserved communities Number of underserved communities/members that are reached by community engagement events and products Underserved community participant satisfaction with education program/product	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other

Objective: Inclusive Governance

Enable the meaningful involvement of underserved communities in decision-making processes.

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
Collaborate with the Regional Fishery Management Councils to assess the current level and type of engagement of underserved persons in public meetings and input processes, and co-develop strategies to increase engagement	Number of methods implemented to increase participation in meetings Diversity of platforms and methods used to make public meetings accessible to underserved communities Extent to which engagement of underserved community members is expanded beyond baseline within context of ensuring full range of stakeholder views are represented	Staff time; Funding, other
Collaborate with the Regional Fishery Management Councils to assess the current level of participation of underserved persons on council advisory and decision bodies, and co-develop strategies to diversify participation and create pathways to Council membership	Data are collected to track and report representation of underserved communities Extent to which participation of underserved community members is expanded beyond baseline within context of ensuring full range of stakeholder perspectives is represented	Staff time; Funding, other
Encourage the Regional Fishery Management Councils to consider establishing EEJ Advisory Panels to support implementation of the Southeast EEJ Implementation Plan and advise on other EEJ issues related to council activities	EEJ Advisory Panels are considered in each sub-region	Staff time

Develop regional rollout strategies designed to notify underserved communities and other interested stakeholders when NOAA Fisheries solicits nominations from state governors for Council appointments, and communicate information about pending openings, the appointments process, and rationale for appointments	Regional rollout strategies developed Number of communications about upcoming appointment opportunities and process	Staff time; Funding, translation
Assess the current level and type of engagement of underserved persons on non-Regional Fishery Management Council stakeholder advisory and decision bodies (e.g., Take Reduction Teams, ?) and co-develop strategies to diversify engagement and membership	Data are collected to track and report representation of underserved communities Extent to which engagement of underserved community members is expanded beyond baseline	Staff time
Collaborate with state representatives on the Regional Fishery Management Councils and with Council Outreach and Education Committees/Advisory Panels to develop educational materials designed to help fishers better understand (a) the jurisdictions, roles and responsibilities of federal versus state fishery agencies, Councils, and Commissions and (b) who to contact for information and support on local and regional issues and opportunities	Number of educational materials co-developed and distributed to increase fisher capacity to engage in fishery management decision processes Underserved community feedback on educational materials	Staff time and travel; Funding, translation
Collaborate with the Regional Fishery Management Councils to ensure that notifications about meeting and public comment opportunities are readily accessed by underserved communities	Percentage of public meeting notices and documents in languages used by constituency and with translation and interpretation services available Number of new approaches implemented to increase reach of Council communications to underserved communities	Staff time; Funding, translation
Encourage Regional Fishery Management Councils to record Council meetings and make recordings available in appropriate primary languages for stakeholders who do not have time or capability to listen in real time; provide funding support for this effort as needed	Percentage of Council meetings recorded and made available to the public Percentage of recordings interpreted or translated to appropriate primary languages	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Encourage the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Councils to provide for real-time translation of Council, Committee and Advisory Panel meetings (and/or components thereof as appropriate) so that persons whose first language is not English can readily comprehend and contribute to the discussion; provide funding support for this effort as needed	Number or percentage of meetings for which real-time language translation is provided	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Explore feasibility of providing financial assistance to support underserved community participation in Council meetings and other	Number of persons for whom financial assistance is provided for this purpose	Staff time; Funding, other

conservation and management processes		
Collaborate with Regional Fishery Management Councils to explore feasibility of modifying Council meeting locations and schedules as needed to avoid conflicts or take advantage of opportunities related to fixed fishing season openings and closures and to increase the ability for in-person participation by underserved community members	Council meeting locations and schedules are reviewed in the context of fixed seasons Number of meetings held in areas convenient to persons from underserved communities	Staff time
Consider increasing the size of the reduced rate room block and/or use less expensive venues for Council and agency meetings to increase accessibility	Number of Council and agency meetings for which lodging costs are made more affordable	Staff time
Expand ability of underserved persons to participate in MREP by increasing number of overall opportunities per year; dedicating specific number of seats to underserved community representatives; or creating curriculum tailored to underserved communities	Increase in the frequency of opportunities for underserved persons to participate in MREP Number of underserved community members trained Underserved community satisfaction with training and educational resources / materials	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Incorporate into the MREP-SE curriculum an EEJ presentation that describes core principles and summarizes the national and regional EEJ implementation plans	MREP-SE curriculum incorporates an EEJ presentation	Staff time
Explore ways to create more welcoming/safe agency and Council meeting environments through the use of groundrules, facilitators, or other approaches that prioritize inclusion, equality, and the value of diverse perspectives; directly address harmful or threatening communications or harassment that disincentivizes stakeholder engagement	Number of strategies or approaches implemented to prioritize inclusion and equality Demonstrated commitment to addressing harmful or intimidating communications Underserved community feedback on these efforts	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Explore the potential to leverage the skills and relationships of community liaisons to gather and report input from rural and other underserved communities who would otherwise face access barriers. Allocate funds to pay for this service as needed/appropriate.	Number of distribution lists that include these liaisons Number of meetings scheduled to brief underserved community liaisons Percentage of regulatory and policy initiatives for which input is provided by liaisons on behalf of underserved persons/communities	Staff time; Funding, other
Involve Regional Fishery Management Council Advisory Panels in choosing one or two specific scientific research priorities each budget cycle, and enable fishers to participate in such research	Number of cooperative research projects addressing priorities identified by Council Advisory Panels	Staff time; Funding, other

Consider targeted/special competitive grants and pilot projects as means for involving underserved fishery participants in regional research and monitoring activities	Number of grants and pilot projects awarded to underserved fishery participants	Staff time; Funding, other
Identify and implement new strategies to increase accessibility to SEDAR and other data workshops	Number of strategies implemented to increase accessibility to SEDAR and other data workshops Underserved community feedback on strategies	Staff time; Funding, other
Engage underserved communities and stakeholders prior to ESA listings, developing recovery plans, status reviews, or critical habitat designations by hosting accessible informational meetings and public hearings	Number of ESA actions preceded by accessible informational meetings and public hearings Underserved community feedback on those efforts	Staff time and travel; Funding, translation
Increase representation of commercial fishing needs and interests on the Gulf Council	N/A (Include this in plan as "level playing field" message we heard -- no action item)	N/A

Objective: Empowering Environment

Provide the institutional support, including training and resources, needed to implement multiple EEJ approaches at NOAA Fisheries. Internal leadership and management will identify EEJ as priorities and encourage staff to consider EEJ in every aspect of their work.

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
Prioritize the hiring of additional FTE anthropologists / non-economic social scientists in SERO and SEFSC staffing plans	Number of FTE anthropologists or other non-economist social scientists hired in the Southeast	Funding, FTE
Establish sub-regional teams of select NMFS staff members, community liaisons, and focus group participants to support implementation of the EEJ plan, with Division-specific EEJ POCs providing oversight	Teams are established to support implementation of the EEJ Plan in each of the three sub-regions	Staff time; Funding, translation
Hire FTE EEJ Coordinators at SERO and the Center	FTE EEJ Coordinators are hired at SERO and the SEFSC	Funding, FTE
Identify points of contact who can provide technical assistance to underserved community members and liaisons who wish to apply for federal fishery disaster and EEJ-related funding opportunities	Number of contacts identified for this purpose	Staff time; Funding, translation

Develop a strategy for funding execution of the SE EEJ Implementation Plan, along with template proposal language	Number of proposals submitted Amount of funds allocated to EEJ implementation	Staff time
Organize (or participate in) regional workshop(s) with federal agency partners to share pertinent information, including lessons learned, and to leverage resources	Number of strategic partner workshops organized and/or attended by SERO and SEFSC staff	Staff time and travel; Funding, other
Work with observer program to ensure that observers are trained to understand cultural considerations	Learned information about relevant barriers in the SE, and potential solutions, is shared with observer program leadership and staff	Staff time; Funding, training; Funding, translation
Require all staff who produce or review NMFS communication outputs to take plain language training (and annual refresher courses); purchase and require use of Grammarly or similar software	Annual communications training requirements established for all staff whose responsibilities involve oral or written interaction with stakeholders and the larger public	Funding, training
Provide facilitation training to port agents and other staff who interact directly with the public that is specifically focused on interfacing with underserved communities	Facilitation training requirements established for port agents and others who interact with stakeholders on a regular basis	Funding, training
Provide EEJ training to all regional NMFS staff to build a shared understanding of the concepts of EEJ, and how to implement these concepts in their work and evaluate their success	EEJ training requirements established for all NMFS staff	Funding, training
Train all grant reviewers on how to mitigate the types of bias that may disadvantage underserved communities when reviewing applications	Unconscious bias training requirements established for all grant reviewers	Funding, training
Develop and offer NMFS Southeast Region-specific EEJ training to Council members, Advisory Panels, Scientific and Statistical Committees, and other advisors as appropriate	Number of EEJ training sessions convened	Staff time and travel
Increase funding to regional fishery management councils to support the hiring of FTE EEJ Coordinators	Funds are allocated to each Regional Fishery Management Council to hire an FTE EEJ Coordinator	Funding, other
Identify scholarship, internship, and mentorship programs (fish? etc) that can be used to recruit underserved community members along with sources that are readily accessible to underserved communities; draft targeted language for use in opportunity announcements	Number of opportunities established and advertised to underserved communities Number of scholarships, paid internships and mentorships awarded	Staff time; Funding, translation

Build HBCU partnerships to inform execution of the Southeast EEJ Implementation Plan and facilitate entry of underserved persons into ocean-related careers via the STEM pipeline	Number of HBCU partnerships created	Staff time
Invest in a STEM/EEJ workforce training program aimed at empowering marginalized fishing communities; for example, through certification in sustainable seafood production, marine pollution/debris removal services, vessel grounding response, SCUBA technical services, etc	A STEM/EEJ ocean workforce training program is established or funded Number of activities funded within that program	Staff time; Funding, translation; Funding, other
Ensure consistent enforcement of regulations across both recreational and commercial sectors. This includes monitoring catches, quotas, and reporting, fostering a level playing field for all participants.	N/A (Include this in plan as "level playing field" message we heard -- no action item)	N/A

Definitions

Equity means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies including but not limited to:

- Equitable protection from environmental and health hazards
- Equitable access to decision-making processes
- Equitable opportunity for disadvantaged communities that have been historically marginalized

Underserved communities have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. These include geographic communities as well as populations sharing a particular characteristic such as: women and girls; Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons*, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color; persons facing discrimination or barriers related to gender identity; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.