

## **Terms of Reference (TOR) for 2014 Stock Assessment Science Program Review**

### ***Objective***

To examine and evaluate the NEFSC's fishery stock assessment program pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Act (2006) and comparable international agreements. Stock assessments are demographic analyses designed to provide particular scientific advice to living resource managers. The review will focus on the overall program of assessment modeling, approach, review process and communication. This is not intended to be an in-depth review of a particular stock assessment.

Reviewers will provide advice to the Center on the direction and quality of Stock Assessment Science program and suggest areas for improvement.

### ***Term of Reference***

For the review, the Panel shall consider materials provided by the Center and comment on 8 themes that define the stock assessment program:

- 1) Does the Center apply a suitable scientific/technical approach to fishery stock assessment modeling?
- 2) Is the assessment process efficient, effective and clearly described, including terms of reference for assessment reports?
- 3) Does the Center, in conjunction with other entities such as the Councils' Scientific and Statistical Committees, have an adequate peer review process?
- 4) Does the Center work effectively internally and in coordination with the NEFMC, MAFMC, ASMFC, and GARFO to accomplish needed assessments according to a set of priorities? Considerations should include program structure, staffing, funding, and the stock assessment prioritization process.
- 5) Does the Center achieve adequate assessment accomplishments relative to mandates particularly with respect to the number of Fishery Management Plan (FMP) species assessed?
- 6) Does the Center have an effective process in place for taking ecosystem and climate change factors into consideration in the stock assessment process?
- 7) Does the Center adequately engage stakeholders in the stock assessment process and communicate assessment-related results, needs, and research to them effectively?
- 8) Are there opportunities for improving stock assessments and the stock assessment process?