

ACCSP Transition Document

July 26, 2016

Introduction

In May 2016, the ACCSP Coordinating Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission agreed to alter the governance structure of ACCSP. Under the new governance structure, ACCSP will be fully integrated into ASMFC and will be comparable to other ASMFC programs (e.g., ISFMP, Science). Prior to this governance change, ACCSP was an independent program with ASMFC serving as its administrative home.

This governance change will allow:

- Full integration of ACCSP with ASMFC management and science programs;
- Improved visibility among partners and stakeholders;
- Full incorporation of ACCSP activities into state and federal legislative outreach efforts;
- Consistent application of ASMFC policies for all staff;
- More consistent supervision of ACCSP Director.

This document details the plans for fully integrating ACCSP into ASMFC. An Addendum to the ACCSP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will also be developed to formalize all structural changes.

General

ACCSP will be fully integrated into ASMFC, while maintaining its identity for stakeholders and partners as the central fisheries dependent data entity for the Atlantic coast. ACCSP will maintain its current website to provide consistency and transparency for stakeholders seeking data or other information about the program. ASMFC will modify its website homepage to provide a link to the ACCSP site on the primary menu bar. This approach will allow stakeholders easy access through either website.

Outreach efforts will be continued to inform stakeholders of ACCSP's capabilities and resources. The primary function of ACCSP's outreach is to inform users and potential users of new developments and promote program capacities. ACCSP and ASMFC outreach experts will work closely together to develop content, network, and promote ACCSP.

Under this governance change, the ACCSP committee structure and membership will not change significantly. For example, the Coordinating Council and Operations Committee will maintain their current makeup and functions. However, there will be some changes to reduce redundancy between the ASMFC and ACCSP committees. For example, there is no need to have two separate Executive Committees.

The needed modifications to the ACCSP have been divided into short, medium and long-term changes. These are detailed below.

Short-Term Changes (0-6 months)

- ACCSP Director participates in ASMFC processes consistent with other ASMFC directors
- ACCSP staff will be guided by the ASMFC Employee Handbook
- ACCSP Coordinating Council composition remains the same, with continued focus on budgetary and data policy issues
 - Responsible for spending decisions of funding allocated to the Program
 - ASMFC Executive Committee will continue to determine (with NMFS concurrence) the allocation of ACFCMA funds between ASMFC, States, and ACCSP.
 - FIN funding for ACCSP will come directly from NMFS
- ACCSP (Management Committee, Leadership Committee, Policy Committee, Oversight Committee, Interim Action Committee etc.) responsibilities shift and committee composition changes:
 - **3 – State Reps** - One Coordinating Council member or proxy from each Region (see below). These seats may be filled by the Chair, Vice Chair and past Chair of the Coordinating Council.
 - Add additional state representative(s) beyond the Chair, Vice Chair, and the former Chair, if necessary (e.g., a federal partner is chair), to maintain three state regional representatives.
 - CC immediate past Chair, Ex Officio
 - The Coordinating Council Chair and Vice Chair shall serve as the Chair and Vice Chair of the Executive Committee, respectively. It is expected that these positions will usually be rotated among the three regions defined below: New England; Mid-Atlantic; South Atlantic.
 - 1 – NMFS or USFWS Representative
 - 1 – Council Representative for the three Councils (NEFMC, MAFMC, SAFMC)
 - ASFMC Executive Director
 - The ACCSP Director will provide staff support to the Executive Committee meetings.
 - Serves as a ‘quick response’ team when Coordinating Council is not meeting or is impractical.
 - Responsibilities consistent with Coordinating Council as a whole
- ACCSP Director provides at least semi-annual updates with budget highlights to ASMFC Executive Committee
 - Promotes buy-in from state directors
- Approve Addendum to MOU

Mid-Term Changes (6-12 months)

- Continue Integration
 - Look for staff efficiencies in technical and administrative support

- Consider integration of separate ASMFC and ACCSP outreach efforts
- Consider Information Systems changes (Phase out @accsp.org email addresses and provide ACCSP staff with @asmfc.org emails, etc.)
- Work towards ACCSP as primary data source for ASMFC needs. Find ACCSP-based solutions to ASMFC management and science data needs.
- Update all ACCSP SOPPs to be consistent with ASMFC and reflect the new governance structure.

Long Term Changes (~24 months)

- Integrate planning
 - Incorporate ACCSP Strategic planning into next ASMFC Strategic Plan
 - Both Strategic Plans end in 2018. The ACCSP activities will be included as a new goal in the ASFMC Strategic Plan and no new ACCSP Strategic Plan will be developed.
 - Incorporate provisions to add recommendations from external reviews of ACCSP.
 - ACCSP will fully participate in the ASFMC's annual Action Planning and budgeting process, including a new ACCSP goal in the Action Plan.
 - Consider the need to continue the ACCSP administrative grant. Possibly fold ACCSP administrative funding into ASFMC programmatic budget.
 - Evaluate the impacts of governance changes and see if additional adjustments are warranted.
 - Evaluate and report to CC if ACCSP has been invigorated, renewed engagement from State Directors, and program is advancing in its mission.

July 8, 2016

ADDENDUM

**To the
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

For establishment of an

**ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE
STATISTICS PROGRAM**

(ACCSP)

**ACCSP Coordinating Council
APPROVED: XXXXXXXX**

INTRODUCTION

When first established in May 1995, Section 8 of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) provided that:

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) shall agree on the appropriate method of providing support staff and executive secretarial services to the Council and the Committee established under this Section, subject to the approval of the Council. Responsibility for the day-to-day coordination, planning and implementation of tasks associated with the program shall be the responsibility of all of the partners, under the guidance of the Council and the Committee.

During the first few years of existence, the ACCSP was in a planning stage. Planning was conducted by a variety of committees, with adequate staff support provided first by the ASMFC and then a coordinator from the USFWS who was detailed to the program for a year. As the program completed planning of various modules, it began evolving into an operational stage. Additional staff were required to support planning, building of the central data warehouse, and implementation activities. The need for a permanent home for the ACCSP staff was becoming apparent.

In June 1998, the ACCSP Coordinating Council approved a motion that:

- The ASMFC should serve as the administrative body for the ACCSP and its Coordinating Council,
- The ASMFC should hire new staff under the existing Commission structure to support ACCSP Partners with planning, prototype development, research, and implementation, and
- The services provided by the ASMFC to the ACCSP should be formalized through an addendum to the ACCSP MOU.

An Administrative Assistant, Information Technology Manager, Program Manager, and finally two additional information technology staff were hired from 1999 to 2001. As the program continued to grow, and the public became more aware of the existence and purpose of the ACCSP, discussion continued concerning the structure and support of the program. Options that were considered ranged from continuation of the status quo to complete separation of ACCSP into a stand-alone operational unit. A number of concerns influenced the choice:

- Perception – the public has concerns when data are collected by the same entity that is using the data for management. Separation of ACCSP from regulatory bodies, to the extent practical, was seen to help address this perception issue.
- The structure would be cost effective and meet the administrative obligations of ACCSP efficiently.
- Any structure would be within Current Legal Authority.
- The structure would reflect that the ACCSP is a partnership that includes the ASMFC, and is not just another ASMFC program.

- The structure would accommodate the continuing growth and maturity of ACCSP.
- There would be clear lines of authority within the program.

In July 2001, the Coordinating Council approved a motion that:

- The ASMFC will provide administrative support to the ACCSP.
- A new ACCSP Director position will be created to provide executive leadership for the program. The ACCSP Director will serve as overall program leader and will have executive authority to manage the continuing development and operation of ACCSP.
- The ASMFC Executive Director and ACCSP Coordinating Council Chair will conduct the performance review for the new ACCSP Director, with oversight by the ACCSP Executive Committee.

The Coordinating Council felt that this decision was the best solution for all concerns. ACCSP would be separated from other ASMFC programs, which addresses perception issues. The structure is within current authorities and would meet the ACCSP's administrative obligations in an efficient, cost-effective manner. The Director would provide leadership and management of the program and be the public view of ACCSP. The continued growth and maturity of the program would be well served with a single, strong program leader. Clear lines of authority were provided for policy/program guidance and staff performance review. This resulted in an amendment to the MOU implementing these recommendations.

In 2012, the Program conducted an Independent Program Review (IPR) that resulted in a series of recommendations. To address one of the ACCSP's 2012 IPR recommendations to "undergo a governance review" the Executive Committee formed a Governance Ad-Hoc Workgroup (Workgroup). The IPR Panel Report indicated they "realize that the situation today is very different than 1995¹, when the ACCSP was created. ACCSP needs a better relationship and interface with Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), and linkages established and strengthened. Consideration should be given to placing ACCSP as a program under ASMFC, which could possibly re-engage the state directors. There are issues of economy of scale and potential improvements to efficiency that could be gained, working relationships strengthened, resources leveraged, etc."

It was the recommendation of the workgroup, approved by the ACCSP Coordinating Council and the ASMFC Executive Committee and Commission as a whole in May 2016, that ACCSP be folded into ASMFC as a Program. Under this alternative the ACCSP would be incorporated into the ASMFC, and ACCSP would be congruent with existing ASMFC programs such as the Interstate Fishery Management Program (ISFMP). The ASMFC Executive Director would directly supervise the ACCSP Director, and all staff would be governed by existing ASMFC governance structures. This alternative should not have any affect under the current budget of ACCSP or ASMFC.

¹ [Original Memorandum of Understanding between partners framed the ACCSP in 1995.](#)

AMENDMENT

This Addendum incorporates the June 1998, July 2001 and May 2016 program changes into the MOU, as follows:

All references in Section Eight to *Atlantic Fisheries Statistics* are be amended to read *ACCSP*.

Section 8 is amended to read:

- A. *Atlantic Fisheries Statistics Coordinating Council*. There shall be an Atlantic Fisheries Statistics Coordinating Council (hereafter: Council). The Council shall oversee the design and implementation of the ACCSP, set policy to guide the Program and the partners participation therein, allocate funding dedicated to the Program, establish Committees as necessary, and recommend solutions for any issue related to the program raised by any of the partners to the ASMFC Executive Committee. The Council members, who shall represent the policy levels within their agencies with the ability to make policy commitments therefore, shall be: one voting representative of each signatory partner, plus three (3) additional nonvoting representatives from NMFS. The Council shall make its decisions by consensus where possible, or by majority vote. The Council shall elect its Chair and Vice Chair.
- B. *ACCSP Operations Committee*. The ACCSP Operations Committee will recommend program priorities, funding criteria, and other items as requested by the Coordinating Council, and/or ACCSP Director. It shall also be responsible for maintaining the *Program Design*, making changes to fisheries standards as needs evolve. The Operations Committee is comprised of an experienced staff person from each partner and one representative each from the National Marine Fisheries Service Headquarter Office of Science and Technology, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Southeast Regional Office, the Greater Atlantic Fisheries Regional Office, and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. The Operations Committee shall make its decisions by consensus.
- C. *ACCSP Director*. The ACCSP Director serves as overall program leader and has authority to manage the continuing development and operation of ACCSP consistent with guidance from the Coordinating Council. The ACCSP Director reports to and receives guidance from the Executive Director of ASMFC who in turn shall abide by the data management, collection and standards policy decisions made by the Coordinating Council with respect to the ACCSP mission. The ACCSP Director will be responsible for supervision of ACCSP staff. Specific responsibilities include providing overall guidance to all ACCSP staff, ensuring the policies of both the ASFMC and ACCSP are met by ACCSP staff, coordinating long-range planning and budget requirements, , and conducting annual performance evaluations of ACCSP staff. Hiring and firing of ACCSP staff shall be consistent with ASMFC policy. The ACCSP Director will provide staff support to all ACCSP Committees and Subcommittees and administer any grant or cooperative agreement associated with the ACCSP.

D. *ASMFC Program Support.*

The ASMFC Executive Director shall ensure that the ACCSP Director is accountable for implementation of the ACCSP program elements and for carrying out policies of the Coordinating Council. The ASMFC Executive Director, in consultation with the ACCSP Coordinating Council Chair will conduct the annual performance review for the ACCSP Director consistent with ASMFC policy.

The ASMFC shall provide appropriate administrative and logistical services/support for ACCSP operations, as with all other ASMFC programs. The ACCSP long term and annual planning processes shall be integrated with those already in existence for ASMFC, conform to policy as set by the Council and informed by periodic independent reviews of the ACCSP.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**

**ACCSP
Director**

**Director of
Communications**

**Director of Finance
and Administration**

**Director of
Fisheries Science**

**Director of
Interstate Fisheries
Management Program**