

Discussion Summary for  
Joint Plan Team Subgroup on Research Priorities meeting  
27 January 2015

The JPT Subgroup on Research Priorities met via teleconference on January 27, 2015. The subgroup's discussion was in response to an SSC request for additional research project examples for the proposed new research priority categories:

- Critical Ongoing Monitoring
- Urgent
- Important
- Useful

The SSC subgroup that developed the new categories provided a working document with draft definitions and examples which served as a reference for JPT subgroup discussion and is provided in the other attachment under D-5.

The JPT subgroup initially addressed the four-category structure and its general intent. In the proposed structure, the top two categories appear to highlight research needs that *must* be funded and are differentiated by being either permanent (critical ongoing monitoring) or temporary (urgent) needs, while the lower two categories appear to reflect discretionary research needs. The subgroup suggests that the SSC clarify whether the distribution of research needs in the bottom two categories is expected to be even, reflective of, for example, a splitting of ranked research needs between the two, or whether most projects would end up in the "important" category. In either case, it was the general impression of the JPT subgroup that projects in the "useful" category were unlikely to be considered for funding.

Another issue that the JPT subgroup wrestled with was the issue that no costs are included in this ranking process. While one item might be seen as being slightly more important than another, it might cost 10 or 100 times as much. Thus it is essential that projects in lower categories not be rejected categorically, as they may actually provide the most "bang for the buck."

The JPT subgroup went through the categories in order and made comments for each. The existing examples are in strikethrough font where the JPT subgroup felt they were not appropriate and/or should be associated with a different category.

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Critical Ongoing Monitoring:

Comments: The subgroup did not offer alternative examples as it was generally accepted that the category exists to highlight the need for maintaining existing surveys and these are already provided in the examples. The group did question how surveys that are needed for some species, but do not yet exist (A.I. golden king crab and scallop), would relate to this category. In other words, do they go in there now with "no action" as research status or are they included only after they have been initiated?

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Urgent:

Comments: As above, the subgroup felt that some description may be helpful for how a project moves up (or down) from here in priority. Additionally, there was recognition that the timeframe for projects in this category could vary greatly.

Existing Examples:

- ~~— genetics analyses to resolve stock delineation questions for harvest specifications~~
- social science surveys to inform the design of new rationalization programs
- ~~deep-sea coral habitat mapping~~
- ~~marine mammal ecology or fishery interaction studies that would provide important input into Biological Opinions or NEPA analyses~~

Additional Examples:

- research to reduce bycatch of endangered, threatened or overfished species likely to impact directed fisheries (e.g., Chinook bycatch in pollock fishery), halibut deck-sorting, salmon excluder projects
- fishery-interaction studies that assess the impacts of proposed and current regulations
- where data gaps constrain or hinder current decision-making and management, i.e., marine mammal surveys or salmon genetics to resolve stock of origin.

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Important:

Comments: The subgroup suggests that language be provided to clarify the separation of “important” and “useful” and expects that the distinction would relate to applicability to current fishery management needs.

Existing Examples (none were eliminated):

- studies to improve parameters for stock assessment
- gear research to reduce bycatch
- management strategy evaluations to examine robustness of harvest policies to climate change
- incorporation of uncertainty into harvest-setting
- examination of ecosystem thresholds for management, particularly if these have been identified as items to implement expressed goals of the NPFMC through the groundfish PSEIS work plan or FEP

Additional Examples (these were moved from urgent):

- genetics analyses to resolve stock delineation questions for harvest specifications,
- deep-sea coral habitat and other habitat mapping

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Useful:

Comments: This continues to be a difficult word for the subgroup to accept. The subgroup is concerned that the term “useful” would essentially ensure that projects in that group not get funding. Nevertheless, there is a need to categorize where to put research over longer temporal scales that is important but not likely to be resolved in a short/management-related time frame or provide information that can be incorporated into management in the near term.

Existing Examples (none were eliminated):

- ichthyoplankton surveys or analyses that have not yet been linked to a stock assessment or fishery management\*
- new methods to monitor disease or contaminant levels in living marine resources

Additional Examples (language added):

- \* but may have the potential for influencing future assessments or management direction
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Other Comments

At the end of the call, it was noted that a new socio-economic project as well as five new assessment-related research projects have been identified. The JPT subgroup considered assigning them to the new categories, but instead decided to wait for an indication of the SSC's readiness to move forward with the new research priority categories.

Research Priorities Query and Records List [Export](#) [New Record](#)

Plan Teams ▾  
 Joint Groundfish PT  
 Crab PT  
 Scallop PT

State ▾  
 Rejected  
 Pending  
 Approved

Council Actions ▾  
Ecosystem Area ▾  
Council Priority ▾  
Research Status ▾

10 records per page Search:

ID ▲	Title	Council/SSC Priority	Research Status	Ecosystem Area	Related Council Action
431	Develop tools for analyzing coastal community vulnerability to fisheries management changes	High	Underway	Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, Arctic	Fishery Dependent Community Assessments
451	Pending - Arrowtooth flounder stock structure and movement	Pending	Pending	Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands	Pending
452	Pending - Dusky Rockfish and Shortspine Thornyhead genetics research for improved population structure	Pending	Pending	Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, Arctic	Pending
453	Pending - Cod density in untrawlable areas in the AI	Pending	Pending	Aleutian Islands	Pending
454	Pending - Sculpin natural mortality, seasonal food habits	Pending	Pending	Gulf of Alaska	Pending
455	Pending - Shark aging, size at maturity, natural mortality	Pending	Pending	Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, Arctic	Pending

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