

Review of Fishery Ecosystem Plan Development



Ecosystem Technical Committee Meeting
May 9, 2025

Acronyms



EBFM	Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management
ETC	Ecosystem Technical Committee
FEI	Fishery Ecosystem Issue
FEP	Fishery Ecosystem Plan
O&E	Outreach and Education Technical Committee

Inflation Reduction Act projects: climate ready fisheries management



1. Develop Gulf FEP

- Climate-focused FEIs
- Pilot Red Tide FEI
- Social science consultant: develop and conduct stakeholder engagements for Gulf FEP

Inflation Reduction Act projects: climate ready fisheries management



2. Management Integration and Response

- Improve timeliness of integrating updated scientific information into management decisions
- Program review consultant: Conduct regulatory review across RMCs
- Process streamlining consultant: Work with staff to prioritize and develop mechanisms to implement viable regulatory processes identified in program review

FEP Timeline



Oct 2018: Council motion to begin FEP development and establish ETC

Feb 2021: LGL Ecological Research Associates contracted to develop FEP

Apr 2022: Council approves final LGL FEP as a framework for Gulf FEP

Oct 2023: Council approves red tide as a pilot FEI

Mar 2020: Inaugural ETC meeting

Sep/Dec 2021: ETC receives updates and provides feedback on LGL FEP

Apr/Sep 2023: ETC discusses modifications to FEP/FEI structure, FEI prioritization, recommends FEIs

Aug 2024: Council receives Inflation Reduction Act funding to support FEP completion

Draft FEP Outline



Fishery Ecosystem Issue (FEI)

A specific fishery management issue or problem that occurs within the Gulf, or a subregion of the Gulf, that may be addressed or solved through Gulf Council action. FEIs provide a structured process to address ecosystem issues that may not otherwise be considered within the single stock management paradigm.

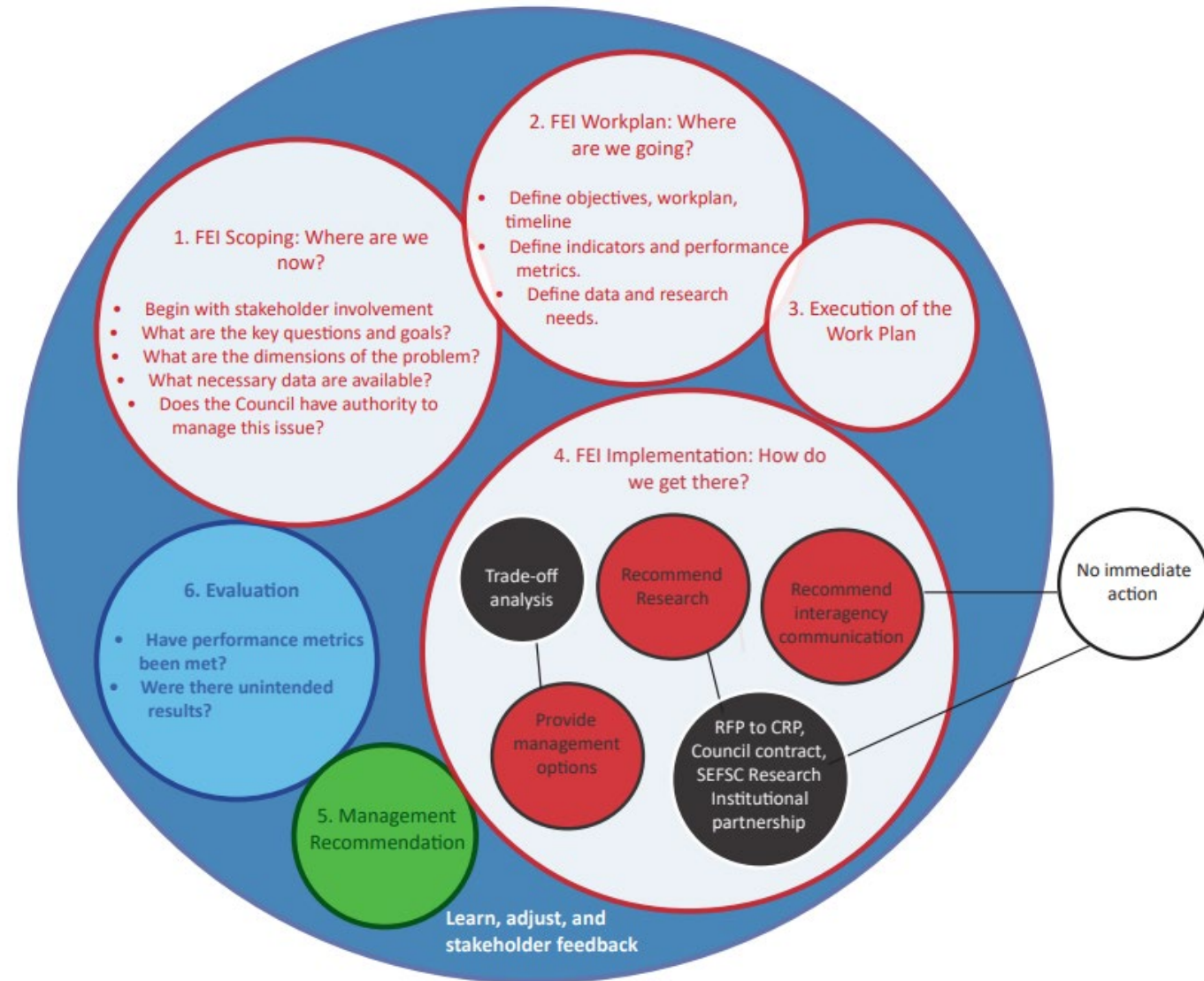
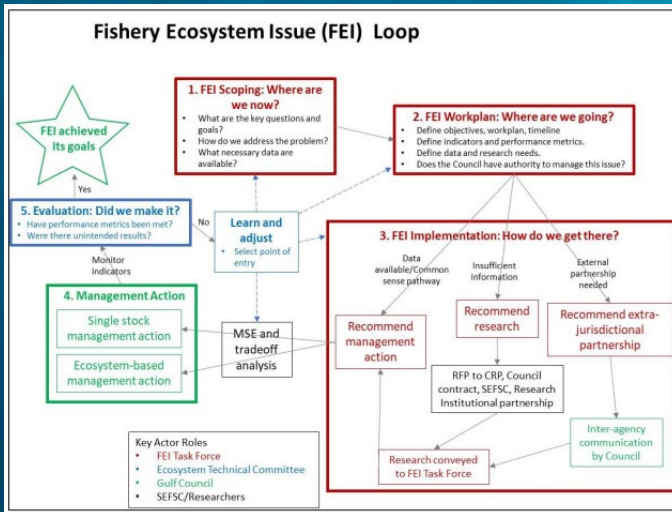
-LGL draft FEP

	Content
Ch 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to national guidance to implement Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management Efforts into the Council process• Gulf Council's EBFM efforts• Overarching Goals and Objectives
Ch 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to FEP• Introduction to FEIs• Protocol for prioritizing FEIs• Protocol for addressing extra jurisdictional issues
Ch 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communications Plan
Ch 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intro to FEI Loop• Specifications of what information would come out of each step within the loop
Appendix	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• List of FEIs on the docket. The list would be revised at an interval determined by the Council. (e.g., annually, biannually)
Separate Modules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each FEI would have its own hyperlink or document outlining the issue and outcomes from each step of the FEI Loop. This would live within the Council's <i>Ecosystem</i> webpage

Modified from LGL draft, ETC Sep 2023

FEI Loop

LGL proposed FEI loop



Modified from LGL draft, ETC Sep 2023

Recommended FEIs*



- Apr 2022: Council tasked ETC with developing goals and objectives for up to 4 FEIs
 - Apr 2023: ETC recommends 6 FEIs
 - Red tide
 - Reducing discards
 - Finfish depredation
 - Impacts of climate change on fish and fishing communities
 - Chasing optimum yield
 - Offshore wind energy
- Jun 2023: Removed from
FEI list by Council

*Not formally prioritized; no stakeholder input

FEI Prioritization



- Apr and Sep 2023: ETC explored development of scoring system for ranking FEIs
- Discussed two axes
 - Ecological, social, economic scope
 - Management capacity
- Not yet finalized

CRITERIA	TOTAL
Type of Affected Species/Resources	3
Number of Affected Species/Resources	4
Geographic Scope	6
Magnitude of Stakeholder Impact	3
Number of stakeholders affected	5
Urgency of the issue	4
Council actionability	5
Type of action (short vs long-term, extrajurisdictional)	4
Ecosystem benefits of action	4
Fishery impacts of action	4
Impacts of no action	4
Climate change exacerbating/mitigating	1
Cost, feasibility, ability to monitor	1
Supported by existing policies, FMP objectives	1
Frequency	1

FEP Communications



- Jan 2023: Council tasks O&E with FEP stakeholder engagement
- Apr 2023: O&E representation at ETC meeting
- Dec 2023: O&E discusses FEP outreach
- Jan 2024: O&E developed FEP Communications Plan presented to Council (*04c - Ms. Muehlstein*)

Social science consultant



- Develop and conduct FEP stakeholder engagements
 - Identify and prioritize FEIs
- Identify stakeholder groups not typically engaged with Council communications
- Evaluate impacts of priority FEIs on fishing communities
- Finalizes Chapter 3 - FEP Communications Plan

Goals for this meeting



- Work through Red Tide Pilot FEI (V)
- Discuss next steps to develop and operationalize the Gulf FEP (VI)
- Ecosystem Status Report update and discussion of indicators to inform FEIs (VII)