



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

Tab A, No. 8a

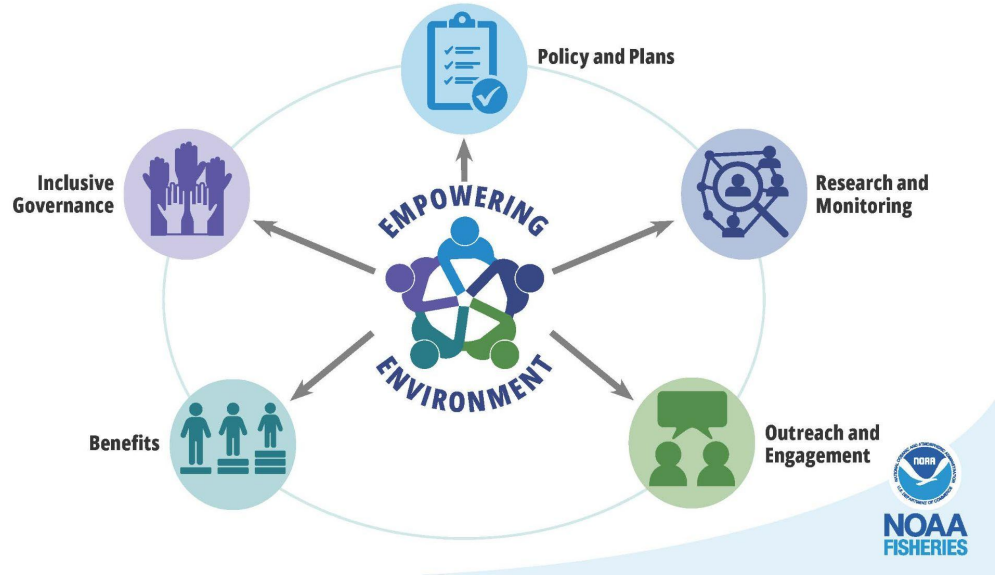
# **NOAA Fisheries Southeast Equity and Environmental Justice Implementation Plan**

April 10, 2024

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

# NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Equity and Environmental Justice Implementation Plan

- Implements National EEJ Strategy
- Review draft transmitted to HQ April 5
  - 47 immediate / near-term (funded) items
  - 30 longer-term (unfunded) items
- Living document to be reviewed and updated on 5-year schedule



# Outline

- Review Council feedback on comprehensive list of suggested action items
- Review refined list of action items incorporated into draft Southeast EEJ Implementation Plan
- Discuss areas of collaboration

# Research & Monitoring

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

- **Council Staff Feedback**

- Look for opportunities to align priorities (NOAA Fisheries, Council, NAS)
  - Social vulnerability indicators
  - Diversification
  - Allocation
- Manage expectations as many Council research and monitoring priorities have not been resourced

- **Immediate or Near-Term (Funded) Actions**

- Conduct research and analysis to identify underserved communities and understand their issues and challenges
- Partner to explore & engage on key topics
  - Tools to identify and understand underserved communities
  - Participatory research and citizen science
  - Effects of allocation decisions
  - Impacts of seafood imports

# Research & Monitoring

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

- **Longer Term (Unfunded) Actions Dependent Upon Additional Resources**
  - Evaluate equity issues in fisheries, including underserved community challenges, and procedural equity in fishery decision making process
  - Analyze impacts, including social, cultural, and economic impacts of services and management decisions, and expected vs. actual impacts of fishery management actions
  - Examine the importance of diversifying operations in fisheries
  - Conduct research to illuminate specific underserved populations and issues, including consumptive or subsistence use and women in fishing
  - Identify challenges and lessons learned from disaster events

# Policies & Plans

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

- **Council Staff Feedback**
  - Use clear terminology, defined terms
  - Identify meaningful metrics
  - Consider relevant authorities, roles, responsibilities
  - Develop best practices vs policy directives
  - Present actions at consistent scale
- **Immediate or Near-Term (Funded) Actions**
  - Aquaculture grants-research opportunities
  - SE Climate Regional Action Plans
  - National Seafood Strategy (shrimp +)
  - Observer program
  - Fisher surveys
  - Engagement and entry barriers
  - Financial assistance for underserved community engagement

# Policies & Plans

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

- **Longer Term (Unfunded) Actions Dependent Upon Additional Resources**
  - Simplify permit access and renewal processes and provide technical support
  - Develop policy framework to understand, gather, and incorporate local and traditional ecological knowledge

# Benefits

*Distribute benefits equitably by increasing access to opportunities*

- **Council Staff Feedback**

- Data collection, analyses and interpretation needed to characterize beneficiaries -- role of social vulnerability indicators
- Manage expectations as grant funding is limited
- Consider relevant authorities, roles, responsibilities

- **Immediate or Near-Term (Funded) Actions**

- Track and report data
- Identify and address barriers -- grants, vocational, capital
- Promote or improve equitability of fishery disaster assistance allocations
- Preserve infrastructure, working waterfronts
- Promote monitoring and mitigation of major infrastructure impacts, natural resource injuries
- Minimize user conflicts with wind energy projects

# Benefits

*Distribute benefits equitably by increasing access to opportunities*

- **Longer Term (Unfunded) Actions Dependent Upon Additional Resources**
  - Co-develop or support high school technical courses and vocational training in fishing and aquaculture

# Outreach & Engagement

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

- **Council Staff Feedback**

- Identified options, opportunities, interest in supporting support certain actions
- Highlighted information collection challenges
- Emphasized importance of not just reaching but retaining target audiences
- Supported need for additional plain language training
- Questioned role of community NGOs

- **Immediate or Near-Term (Funded) Actions**

- NOAA Sea Grant workshop
- Translation guidance, options
- Tailored, diverse outreach strategies
  - Regulatory changes
  - Opportunities
  - Disaster declarations and assistance
- Plain language strategies
- Virtual meeting hubs (exploratory)
- Survey-related outreach

# Outreach & Engagement

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

- **Longer Term (Unfunded) Actions Dependent Upon Additional Resources**
  - Allocate and track translation funding
  - Identify or create multilingual stakeholder liaison(s) at SERO and the SEFSC
  - Establish community liaison network of NOAA Sea Grant and other partners as appropriate
  - Employ strategies to facilitate more frequent and meaningful outreach and interaction with female stakeholders

# Inclusive Governance

*Enable the meaningful involvement of underserved communities in decision-making*

- **Council Staff Feedback**

- Identified options, opportunities, interest in supporting support certain actions
- Highlighted information needs, collection challenges
- Recommended alternative approaches
- Noted authorities, roles, responsibilities
- Identified funding challenges, concerns

- **Immediate or Near-Term (Funded) Actions**

- Engagement strategies for public meetings and input processes; Council and other advisory, decision bodies
- Information sharing about Council appointment opportunities, process
- Considered use of Council Committees/Advisory Panels to advise on EEJ issues, support implementation plan
- Educational materials and training programs
- Options to inform research priorities, contribute to or participate in research
- Early engagement in Endangered Species Act decision making

# Inclusive Governance

*Enable the meaningful involvement of underserved communities in decision-making*

- **Longer Term (Unfunded) Actions Dependent Upon Additional Resources**
  - Leverage community liaisons to gather and report underserved community input
  - Develop targeted competitive grants and pilot projects
  - Fund Gulf and South Atlantic Council to support real-time professional translation or alternative services

# Empowering Environment

*Provide institutional support to implement EEJ*

- **Council Staff Feedback**
  - Expressed support for support certain actions
  - Cautioned to manage expectations as funding is limited
- **Immediate or Near-Term (Funded) Actions**
  - Integration of EEJ commitments into organizational priorities
  - EEJ funding strategy
  - EEJ implementation teams -- NMFS and Councils
  - EEJ training -- NMFS and Councils
  - Partnerships to diversify STEM pipeline
  - Scholarship, internship, mentorship programs
  - Federal partnerships to leverage resources and address cross-jurisdictional challenges

# Empowering Environment

*Provide institutional support to implement EEJ*

- **Longer Term (Unfunded) Actions Dependent Upon Additional Resources**
  - Organizational capacity -- EEJ Coordinators, FTE anthropologists or other non-economic social scientists, FTE biologists for Caribbean work
  - Training -- Plain language, facilitation, unconscious bias
  - Technical assistance with grants and other funding opportunities
  - STEM/EEJ workforce training program

# Next Steps

- Final implementation plan undergoing internal review; to be rolled out to public June 2024
- 5-year review schedule; interim updates as needed

THANK YOU!