

Project Description

Performance Review of the International Pacific Halibut Commission November 2011 – April 2012

OVERVIEW

The U.S. and Canadian IPHC Commissioners, in cooperation with their governments, have agreed to an independent Performance Review of the International Pacific Halibut Commission¹ to build upon the Commission's work to-date and ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

The review – part of an ongoing international practice to assess regional fishery management organizations – is expected to generate a focused report that will, among other objectives:

- Assess recent performance of the Commission relative to achievement of the goals set out in the Treaty and its various amendments;
- Identify effective practices already used by the Commission and highlight opportunities to incorporate (1) best practices employed by other leading international fisheries and oceans management bodies charged with implementing agreements and (2) new approaches put forward by stakeholders;
- Consider, in particular, opportunities to strengthen Commission governance, including stakeholder involvement, information sharing, policy development, decision-making processes and general Commission practices

The Commission is committed to supporting a performance review that is both independent and fully informed by the broad suite of interests impacted by, interested in and knowledgeable of the work of the Commission.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW APPROACH

The Canadian and U.S. governments recognize that the performance review must have both perceived and actual impartiality if it is to be considered credible and have lasting impact. To that end, the Commission has contracted with CONCUR², Inc., a U.S.-based firm adept at conducting in-depth impartial assessments of fishery and other natural resource-focused organizations and initiatives, to undertake the review. CONCUR is performing its work independent of Commission staff and is coordinating with a two-person convening panel comprising one U.S. and one Canadian government representative.

The review, to be carried out between November 2011 and April 2012, will assess Commission performance and practices over the past decade. This ten-year time horizon is intended to allow

¹ The use of the term “Commission” refers to the six Commissioners that comprise the IPHC. The term “Commission staff” refers to the 29-person staff, including IPHC Director Bruce Leaman.

² More information about CONCUR is available at www.concurinc.com.

for a focused look at the Commission's most recent work, yet be sufficiently broad to fold in an evaluation of recent changes, such as the shift to a coastwide assessment.

CONCUR will rely on the following methodologies to assess the Commission's work and practices, track effectiveness and gauge the need for revised approaches:

- ***In-depth, focused stakeholder interviews.*** The bulk of CONCUR's assessment will be drawn from a series of confidential, one-on-one interviews to be conducted with a representative and diverse set of stakeholders – processors, fishermen (commercial, recreational and First Nations/Native Alaskan/tribal representatives including those harvesters affected by halibut by-catch limits), Commission members and staff, academics/scientists, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and others. CONCUR expects to interview approximately 40 people to ensure its work is informed by a broad range of perspectives. Importantly, the interviews are meant to be a representative sample; they are not intended to be a “census” of all interested parties. Candidate interviewees will be identified using criteria to ensure all interests are adequately represented in the assessment process. The interviews, to be structured around a focused set of questions, are to take place from December through February by phone, in-person and/or via web survey (as necessary).
- ***Document review.*** CONCUR will review a range of Commission-related materials, from foundational Conventions, financial regulations and rules of procedure, to annual reports, research plans, stock assessment reviews and yearly budgets. CONCUR also intends to conduct a focused review of other regional fishery management organizations to identify best practices for possible incorporation into the Commission's approach. As well, CONCUR will draw on its own extensive experience and professional judgment.
- ***Commission observation.*** Finally, CONCUR is to attend the Commission's 2011 interim meeting and 2012 annual meeting to track the nature of presentations and discussions, consider the science-policy interface, and assess the Commission's deliberative and decision-making process. CONCUR also anticipates observing Conference Board and Processor Advisory Group proceedings at the 2012 annual meeting in Anchorage.

As needed through its work, CONCUR will seek technical guidance from the convening panel described earlier. However, CONCUR's findings and recommendations – to be included in a final report submitted by April 30, 2012 – will be developed independent of the Commission, its members and staff, and U.S. and Canadian government officials.

WORK PRODUCT

The result of CONCUR's assessment will be summarized in a final report to be submitted to the Commission by April 30, 2012. The report will include both findings and recommendations. The findings will represent a synthesis of key themes and issues surfaced during the interviews, document reviews, direct observations and survey (if conducted). The recommendations will reflect CONCUR's targeted suggestions based on the findings. It is not anticipated that the review will suggest revisions to the Treaty or its amendments, but to the extent CONCUR's

recommendations may necessitate changes to the Treaty or implementing procedures, such considerations will be explicitly flagged for the Commission's consideration.

ROLL-OUT PROCESS

To ensure CONCUR's report on the performance review is comprehensive, factually accurate and relevant, the rollout process is anticipated to follow these steps:

- ***Fact-Checking.*** CONCUR will seek feedback from the U.S. and Canadian government staff serving as a Panel and/or Commission staff regarding specific factual details to be included in the report. Input will be limited to fact-checking and clarifying comments only; CONCUR will retain full editorial control. This step is likely to occur in March.
- ***Confirm Characterization of Interview Results.*** CONCUR will seek feedback from interviewees regarding relevant sections of the findings included in the report. The intent of this review is to ensure the findings (as distinct from CONCUR's recommendations) are sufficiently comprehensive and accurately reflect the comments shared with CONCUR during the interview process. Again, while input will be sought from interviewees, CONCUR will retain full editorial control. This step is likely to occur in late March/early April.
- ***Convene Webinar with Commission.*** CONCUR will submit its final report to the Commission no later than April 30, 2012. Soon after, the Commission is expected to meet with CONCUR, via webinar, to formally accept the report and pose any questions it may have regarding the findings and recommendations. The webinar for presentation of the report is expected to occur in May 2012.
- ***Commission Response.*** The Commission anticipates drafting and releasing a formal response to the performance review report, highlighting any steps it intends to take based on CONCUR's recommendations and in consideration of stakeholder feedback. The Commission's formal response is expected in late 2012/early 2013 and would likely articulate steps to consider and implement advice contained in the performance review.

Please contact Allison Webb (613-991-0164) with Fisheries and Oceans Canada or John Field (202-647-3263) with the U.S. Department of State for further information on the Performance Review process.