

Council Priorities Process

In order to allocate Council and staff resources in an organized manner, each fall the Council will identify its planned activities for the following year. This process will take place over two consecutive Council meetings. The objective is to identify priorities in time for the start of the Council's fiscal year but deviations from this schedule may occur. The following steps are intended to provide general guidance to promote transparency.

Initial Task List

Working with staff, the Executive Director will prepare an initial list of tasks that the Council will consider for the following year. The identified tasks should be those that require a Council activity or action, or that require extensive staff involvement (e.g. stock assessments, extensive working groups, monitoring reports, etc.). The goal is to create as comprehensive a list as possible of actions the Council may want to consider, without considering resource limitations. Suggestions from Committees or the public will be included. Tasks that are legal or regulatory requirements will be identified, as will tasks that are ongoing or expected to take more than one year. This list does not imply a particular organization to tasks that are ultimately adopted. Items on this list will not be prioritized, and inclusion on the list does not mean any particular task is adopted. It will be reviewed by the Executive Committee for thoroughness and presented to the Council at a meeting in early fall. The Council will modify and approve the list for further review.

Task Selection

After this initial list is completed, individual Council members will be provided an opportunity to rate the importance of each task. Members are asked to rank every task, even those that may be required. This helps determine if there is a need to more closely examine whether a required task could be modified through a future Council action (for example, by changing the periodicity of the requirement). Committees will also be provided an opportunity to prioritize the tasks for their Committee. Using this information, the Executive Committee will prepare a recommendation for the tasks that will be addressed in the following year. The Executive Committee will consult with the Executive Director to match the recommendations to the available resources. It will also develop a preliminary "bundling" of tasks – that is, which tasks might be included in the same action.

The Council will consider the Executive Committee recommendations, normally at a meeting in late fall. Changes to the Executive Committee recommendation should address whether they can be accommodated with the available resources. The Council will approve the final list, which will be used to guide Council activities in the following year. "Bundling" identified at this meeting will normally be followed, but deviations are allowed without Council concurrence.

Modifications

New issues might be identified at any time during the year and may necessitate a change to the Council's planned activities. Any subsequent changes to the approved priorities list must first be discussed by the appropriate Committee – preferably at a meeting, but through correspondence if a meeting is not planned. The Committee will bring the proposed change forward at a subsequent Council meeting, along with a recommendation on whether it should be adopted or not. The Committee should also address how the suggested change will be reconciled with any resource constraints. Adoption of the proposed change requires a 2/3 vote of the members present at a Council meeting. Any mid-year change that is not adopted by the Council will be added to the initial task list during the following year's priority setting process.