



Terms of Reference for the Conservation Services Programme Research Advisory Group

1. The Conservation Services Programme

The Conservation Services Programme (CSP), administered by Department of Conservation (DOC), is a programme of research focused on understanding and mitigating the adverse effects of commercial fishing on protected species in New Zealand fisheries waters.

The CSP vision is that “*commercial fishing is undertaken in a manner that does not compromise the protection and recovery of protected species in New Zealand fisheries waters*”. In order to meet this vision, the following CSP Objectives have been identified:

- A. Proven mitigation strategies are in place to avoid or minimise the effects of commercial fishing on protected species across the range of fisheries with known interactions.
- B. The nature of direct effects of commercial fishing on protected species is described.
- C. The extent of known direct effects of commercial fishing on protected species is adequately understood.
- D. The nature and extent of indirect effects of commercial fishing are identified and described for protected species that are at particular risk to such effects.
- E. Adequate information on population level and susceptibility to fisheries effects exists for protected species populations identified as at medium or higher risk from fisheries.

Further details on the scope, mandate and objectives of the CSP, and the annual planning processes used, are described in the CSP Strategic Statement 2013¹.

2. Purpose and scope of the Research Advisory Group

The CSP Research Advisory Group (CSP RAG) is a forum convened to seek technical and strategic advice from Participants to inform the development of CSP Annual Research Plans. In particular, the CSP RAG will:

- o review of progress in relevant research and other activities completed in the previous year, both by CSP and externally;
- o identify research gaps within the CSP mandate, and the documentation of these in the form of a medium term research plan;
- o prioritise research gaps using the principles outlined in Section 3.2; and
- o recommend to DOC prioritised research projects for inclusion in the CSP Annual Plan, or through delivery by other mechanism, for the next financial year.

The key output of the CSP RAG will be advice to DOC on the content of research to be delivered as Conservation Services, or through other means such as partnerships, in the form of a prioritised set of research recommendations that will form a medium term research plan.

Discussion of policy or strategic direction of CSP or DOC is outside of the scope of the CSP RAG.

The CSP RAG does not make commercial fishery management recommendations and decisions.

¹ Available to download from <http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/marine-and-coastal/conservation-services-programme/csp-plans/>

3. Role of the Chair

The role of Chair will be filled by an independent facilitator appointed by DOC. The chair is responsible for:

- ensuring that CSP RAG participants are aware of, and adhere to, the protocols of participation described in this Terms of Reference;
- facilitating open and constructive discussion;
- approving the agenda;
- approving documentation of relevant discussions, advice, and action points;
- striving for consensus where possible and where this cannot be met; fully documenting discussions and the rationale behind those decisions;
- where consensus within CSP RAG is not achieved, deciding on the membership of and need for convening a subcommittee in order to attempt first order dispute resolution;
- seeking resolution of any disputes; and
- forwarding any disputes regarding the CSP RAG that cannot be settled by the Chair to the DOC Chief Scientist for independent evaluation if requested by a Participant.

The chair may also provide technical input during the meeting, in addition to the tasks above.

4. Technical and Administrative Support

Technical and administrative support will be provided by DOC staff. In particular, this will include:

- preparation and distribution of reports and presentations as detailed in Section 7 of these Terms of Reference;
- record keeping, as detailed in Section 8 of these Terms of Reference;
- guidance on the discussion and planning processes used by the CSP RAG; and
- technical input to discussions.

Other relevant government agencies, in particular the Ministry for Primary Industries, will be invited to provide technical support and input to the CSP RAG.

5. Participation

The RAG is open to participation from any interested parties who commit to the principles outlined below. This will include representatives from:

- commercial fishing industry;
- environmental organisations; and
- research providers.

A mailing list will be used to notify Participants of upcoming meetings, key reporting outputs and other relevant matters. Interested parties who wish to participate should ensure their current email address is registered on the mailing list, by sending a request to csp@doc.govt.nz.

RAG Participants must commit to:

- open participation in the discussion;
- apply technical expertise in discussion of issues;
- following up on action points and agreements;
- maintaining the confidentiality of CSP RAG discussions and deliberations (unless otherwise agreed in advance, and subject to the constraints of the Official Information Act);
- a constructive approach;
- facilitating an atmosphere of honesty, openness and trust;
- respecting the role of the Chair; and
- listening to the views of others, and treating them with respect.

Participants in CSP RAG meetings must declare, during opening introductions, their sector affiliations and contractual relationships to the research under consideration, and to declare any substantial conflicts of interest related to any particular issue or scientific conclusion.

Participants who use CSP RAG papers inappropriately, or who do not adhere to the standards of participation, may be requested by the Chair to leave a particular meeting or, in more serious instances, to refrain from attending one or more future meetings.

6. Reports and Presentations

Agendas and background papers will be made available to Participants prior to the meeting via email or the relevant meeting page on the CSP website (www.doc.govt.nz/cspmeetings). Where this is not possible hard copies will be made available at the meeting. Presentations and any other relevant documentation will be made available on the CSP website following the meeting.

7. Record Keeping

Notes will be taken by DOC support staff, and approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting by the Chair. Draft notes will be posted on the CSP website for comment no later than two weeks after the meeting and will be available for comment for two weeks before being finalised.

8. Disputed matters

Consensus by the CSP RAG is not required to be reached. Any points of dispute must in the first instance be raised with the Chair. Should any such point not be mutually resolved, the Participant or the Chair may refer the matter to the DOC Chief Scientist for final independent evaluation.