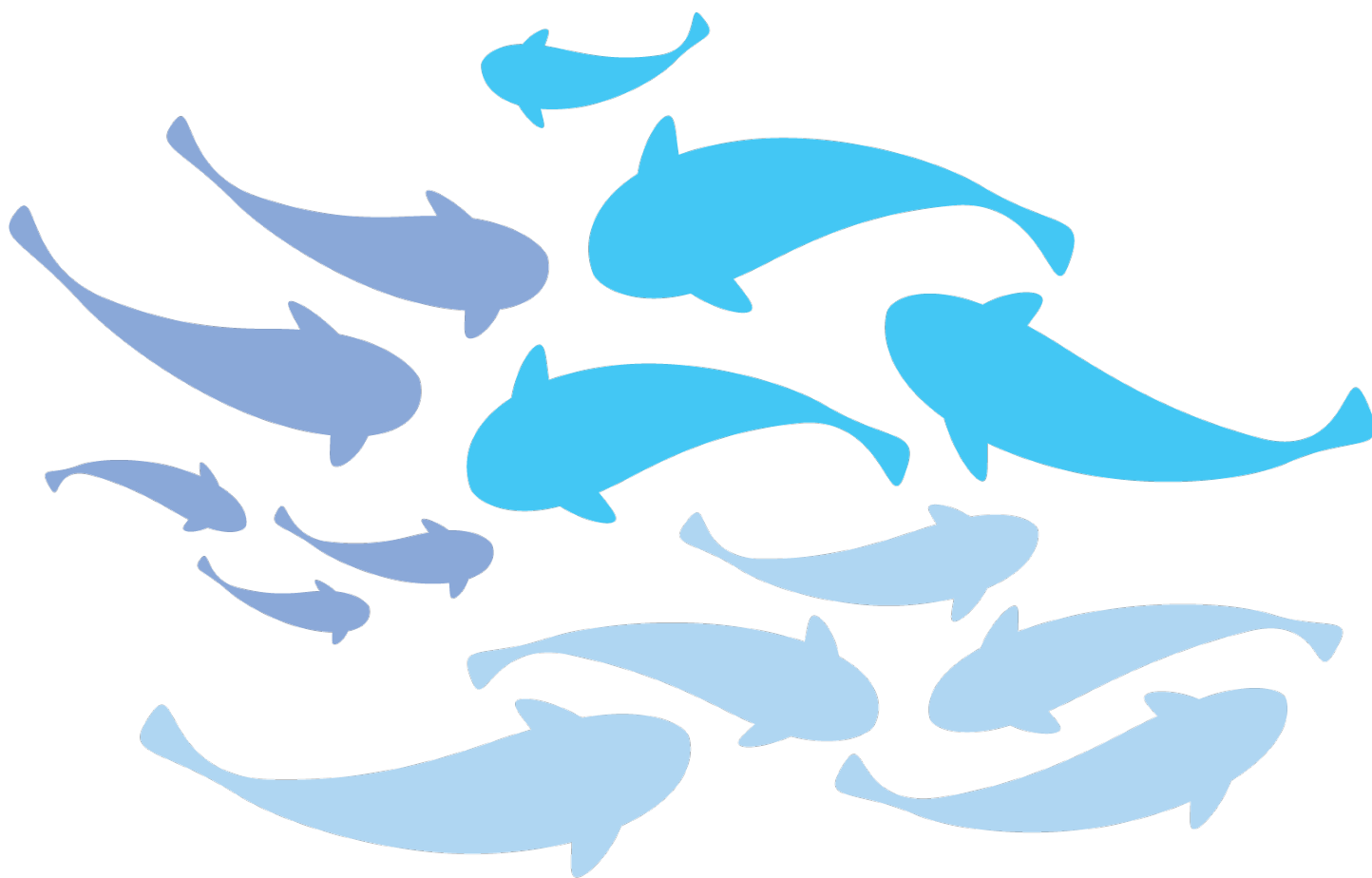


NOAA
FISHERIES

Office of International Affairs, Trade, and Commerce
**Equity and Environmental
Justice Implementation Plan**



Executive Summary

NOAA Fisheries' Office of International Affairs, Trade, and Commerce (IATC) endeavors to equitably serve the U.S. public in our international fisheries management, trade and commerce, and seafood inspection activities. IATC's Implementation Plan uses guidance set forth in NOAA Fisheries' national [Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy](#) to incorporate and prioritize equity and environmental justice (EEJ) in our ongoing and future activities. This plan is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees or agents, or any other person.

The communities that IATC serves vary greatly. We work with Presidentially appointed U.S. commissioners and domestic advisory bodies established to provide input to U.S. delegations to international regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs). We also coordinate with other NOAA Fisheries offices to recommend individuals for appointment as U.S. commissioners or advisors. The representative communities selected to participate on these advisory bodies and in commissioner roles are usually specified by statute, including representatives of commercial and recreational fishing industries, regional fishery management councils, academia, non-governmental organizations, states, and tribal nations. We seek to identify more diverse individuals to help serve in these roles and to participate in U.S. delegations to these organizations and agreements by pursuing broad awareness of opportunities and appointing a diverse suite of candidates who reflect the diversity of the communities we represent.

IATC's Trade and Commerce Division (TCD) and Seafood Inspection Program (SIP) work with the seafood industry (importers, exporters, suppliers, etc.) to provide export promotion of seafood products and address/assist with market access issues. Based on our external engagement planning efforts, we are identifying small and medium-sized enterprises and minority-owned/operated businesses and other diverse communities for increased outreach about our programs. In this area of our work, we plan to use our networks and connections within NOAA Fisheries and with other federal agencies to help identify underserved communities and make others aware of the services we can provide to the seafood industry, regardless of the size of the company.

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List of Acronyms

- DEI: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- EEJ: Equity and Environmental Justice
- IATC: Office of International Affairs, Trade, and Commerce
- IN FISH: Inclusive NOAA Fisheries Internship Program
- RFMO: Regional Fishery Management Organization
- SIP: Seafood Inspection Program
- TCD: Trade and Commerce Division

EEJ Objectives Implementation

IATC uses the objectives framework of NOAA Fisheries’ national [Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy](#), and we have identified priority actions, how their success will be measured (metrics), and the resources needed.

The needs and barriers faced by the people we serve and underserved communities will change over time. In recognition of this, the IATC EEJ Implementation Plan is designed to be a living document. We will review and update it, as applicable, periodically and welcome input on its contents.

To address the barriers faced by underserved communities, NOAA Fisheries developed a framework that includes overarching goals and a series of both short- and long-term actions spread across the six EEJ core areas and objectives to achieve those goals (Table 1). These goals and objectives interact to create the capacity and accountability processes necessary to advance EEJ within the agency, as encouraged in the DOC Equity Action Plan.

Table 1. NOAA Fisheries’ Three Overarching Goals and Six Core Areas and Objectives

NOAA Fisheries’ Equity and Environmental Justice Goals				
Prioritize identification, equitable treatment, and meaningful involvement of underserved communities.	Provide equitable delivery of services.	Prioritize EEJ in our mission work with demonstrable progress.		
Core Areas and Objectives				
Empowering Environment: Provide the institutional support, including training and resources, needed to implement multiple EEJ approaches at NOAA Fisheries. Internal leadership and management will identify EEJ as priorities and encourage staff to consider EEJ in every aspect of their work.				
Policy and Plans: Ensure that our policies promote equal opportunities for all and do not create unintended inequities or unequal burdens for underserved communities.	Research and Monitoring: Identify underserved communities and their needs, conduct collaborative research, and assess impacts of management decisions.	Outreach and Engagement: Build relationships with underserved communities to better understand their engagement preferences, and improve information sharing with all communities.	Benefits: Distribute benefits equitably among communities by increasing the access to opportunities for underserved communities.	Inclusive Governance: Enable the meaningful involvement of underserved communities in decision-making processes.

IATC’s EEJ Implementation Plan does not address all of the core areas and objectives, as not all pertain to the work of our office. We are involved in the Empowering Environment, Outreach and Engagement, and Inclusive Governance pieces.

Empowering Environment

Objective

Provide the institutional support, including training and resources, needed to implement multiple EEJ approaches at NOAA Fisheries. Internal leadership and management will identify EEJ as priorities and encourage staff to consider EEJ in every aspect of their work.

Barriers Addressed: Gaps in Expertise, Gaps in Representation

IATC supports an empowering environment by ensuring diverse hiring committees, participating in the IN FISH program, and working to ensure our trade and commerce and seafood inspection services are more broadly known by smaller, underserved seafood industry companies and communities.

To strengthen an empowering environment for EEJ, IATC will:

- Continue participation in the IN FISH program
- Continue implementing diverse hiring practices
- Conduct outreach to small underserved communities/companies to ensure they are aware of the services provided by IATC

Table 2: Empowering Environment: Actions, Metrics, and Resources Needed

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
1. Continue to participate in the IN FISH internship program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of paid interns ● Number of IATC mentors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leadership support ● Staff time ● Funding for the intern ● Mentor training
2. Continue to conduct diverse hiring panels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of recruitment packages that use diverse hiring panels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff time
3. Conduct outreach to small/underserved seafood industry to educate them about the services IATC provides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of small/underserved businesses contacted/reached 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff time ● Training/education of division staff
4. Enhance internal communications on EEJ approaches to ensure employees are aware of EEJ-related efforts and can contribute to them or learn more about them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of all hands/division-level email communications or trainings conducted to promote EEJ plan and related communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leadership and staff time

Outreach and Engagement

Objective

Build relationships with underserved communities to better understand their engagement preferences and improve information sharing with all communities.

Barriers Addressed: Unawareness of Underserved Communities; Barriers to Engagement and Accessing Services; Gaps in Expertise; Gaps in Representation

IATC incorporates EEJ into our outreach and engagement work by more inclusively soliciting new RFMO U.S. commissioners and working to engage a diverse set of U.S. fishery and seafood industry representatives at all levels.

To embed EEJ into our outreach and engagement, IATC will:

- Engage with interagency partners to identify the specific information and assistance needs of seafood businesses in underserved communities. Based on the results from this preliminary research, we will then be able to design targeted programs to address those specific needs.
- Use the results of our preliminary research to help inform the awareness of the seafood industry (primarily smaller entities) of our Seafood Inspection Program and Trade and Commerce Division services.
- Engage internally with personnel from the Seafood Inspection Program and Trade and Commerce Division and our communications team to design a strategy that provides additional education and outreach targeting small/underserved businesses that may not have awareness of the programs and that may face potential barriers to use.
- Engage with regional fishery management councils and other groups, as appropriate, to help incorporate EEJ input into international efforts, especially activities involving RFMOs.
- Hold regionally specific trade outreach events targeting the seafood industry on a periodic basis. These events will provide updates from IATC on recent trade developments and activities relevant to the U.S. seafood industry, including opportunities for one-on-one meetings on trade, SIP, engagement with key markets, or other related concerns.
- Work with interagency partners and the regional councils to promote the trade outreach events.
- Ensure relevant outreach materials are available in languages relevant to key community groups to the greatest extent possible, such as Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

Table 3: Outreach and Engagement: Actions, Metrics, and Resources Needed

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
1. Engage with interagency partners to identify the specific information and assistance needs of seafood businesses in underserved communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of engagements with interagency partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time
2. Draft an outreach strategy for small/underserved businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach plan drafted (Y/N) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time
3. Implement outreach strategy for small/underserved businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of small/underserved businesses contacted/reached 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • Training/education of division staff
4. Engage with key partners to incorporate EEJ input into RFMO activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of engagement events conducted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFMO U.S. commissioner support • Staff time • Funds for staff and/or partner travel and meeting facilities, in some cases
5. Hold regionally specific trade outreach events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of outreach events held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • Facilities for the meetings • Funds for space rentals
6. Promote trade outreach events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of sets of outreach conducted • Number of attendees for events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time
7. Ensure relevant outreach materials are available in languages relevant to key community groups to the greatest extent possible, such as Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of outreach materials that have been translated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • Funding for translation services

Inclusive Governance

Objective

Enable the meaningful involvement of underserved communities in decision-making processes.

Barriers Addressed: Barriers to Engagement and Accessing Services; Gaps in Representation; System Complexity; Structural Barriers

IATC incorporates EEJ into governance processes by publicly and transparently soliciting nominations of a broad range of individuals, including underrepresented groups as appropriate, for NOAA Fisheries to consider when recommending individuals to potentially serve as U.S. commissioners to RFMOs. RFMOs are essential to ensure the sustainable conservation and management of shared fish stocks and other living marine resources through international cooperation. The U.S. delegations to the RFMOs help to ensure our U.S. fishermen have equitable access to these shared resources and that such resources are sustainably managed.

The representative communities and partners selected to participate on these bodies and in commissioner roles are usually specified by statute, including representatives of commercial and recreational fishing industries, regional fishery management councils, academia, non-governmental organizations, states, and tribal nations. To facilitate broader participation in these organizations, IATC intends to take the following steps to embed EEJ into governance processes as appropriate:

- Work with current U.S. commissioners, NOAA Fisheries regional offices, and the regional fishery management councils to help advertise commissioner, advisory body, and, as appropriate, U.S. delegation positions to a wider audience, including targeted outreach to underrepresented groups where appropriate, noting that the councils are already focusing on promoting the diversity of candidates for council membership.
- Work to make advisory committee and U.S. delegation participation more accessible since members are already attending on their own time through increased virtual participation options.
- Work with U.S. heads of delegation to RFMOs and other international fisheries agreements to ensure opportunities for diverse participation on U.S. delegations.

Table 4: Inclusive Governance: Actions, Metrics, and Resources Needed

Actions	Metrics	Resources Needed
<p>1. Widely advertise commissioner, advisory body, and U.S. delegation positions in order to increase and improve opportunities for underserved communities to engage in the decision-making process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of commissioner positions, advisory bodies, and delegations worked with ● Number of public engagements or solicitations of candidates to serve on U.S. delegations and advisory bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff time ● U.S. commissioner and advisory body support
<p>2. Actively encourage nomination of individuals from underserved communities for commissioner, advisory committee, and U.S. delegation positions to facilitate broader participation and understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of women nominated for appointments ● Data collected to track and report representation of underserved communities - Y/N 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff time ● Outreach plan for new recruits
<p>3. Provide virtual participation options to certain domestic advisory body meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of partners participating virtually in meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● U.S. commissioner and advisory body support ● Funding for A/V and tech support
<p>4. Work with U.S. heads of delegation to RFMOs and other agreements to ensure opportunities for diverse participation on U.S. delegations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of opportunities provided for diverse participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● U.S. heads of delegation support ● Plan to increase opportunities ● Potentially additional funding to ensure participation