

## **SEDAR FAQs**

***A general overview of the SEDAR program and answers to common questions.***

*Updated 2/2015*

**Q:** What is SEDAR?

**A:** The Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) process is a cooperative effort to improve stock assessments in the Southeast Region. The purpose of SEDAR is to: improve the quality and reliability of fishery stock assessments in the southeastern United States; increase the relevance of research and monitoring programs in the region; increase participation in the assessment process; and provide the best available science.

**Q:** What agencies are involved with SEDAR?

**A:** A number of agencies, or “Cooperators”, are involved in the SEDAR process. These agencies include: the South Atlantic, Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils (FMC); NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC), NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office (SERO), and the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Division; and the Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions (ASMFC and GSMFC). SEDAR also relies on state agencies and universities throughout the region for research, data collection and stock assessment expertise.

**Q:** Who is 'in charge' of SEDAR?

**A:** Oversight of the SEDAR program is provided by the SEDAR Steering Committee. This Committee oversees the overall process and project scheduling. Each Cooperator listed above is represented on the Steering Committee. Specific members include: the NOAA Fisheries SEFSC Director; the NOAA Fisheries SERO Administrator; the Executive Directors and Chairmen of the three Regional Councils; the HMS Division Chief; and the Executive Directors of the ASMFC and the GSMFC.

**Q:** How is SEDAR administered?

**A:** SEDAR is a Council process, governed by the rules and regulations of the Regional Fishery Management Councils. Administrative activities are handled through the South Atlantic Council under a grant from NOAA Fisheries.

**Q:** What does SEDAR do?

**A:** SEDAR brings together scientists, researchers, data collectors and managers, fishermen and constituent representatives to participate in the development and review of stock assessments. Most SEDAR activities are conducted by appointed panels and in-person workshops or webinars. The primary objective of the panels is stock assessment analyses for Cooperators. SEDAR also provides a venue for addressing data and procedural issues that are relevant to multiple assessments through its Procedure Workshops series.

**Q:** How can I participate in the SEDAR process?

**A:** SEDAR provides considerable opportunities for participation. Each Cooperator appoints participants to the various workshop panels or groups required for assessment projects under its jurisdiction. Additionally, because it is a Council process, all SEDAR workshops and activities are open to public attendance. Public comment may be taken during SEDAR workshops. Written comment may be submitted to the Cooperator or directly through SEDAR. Contact information is provided at the end of this document.

**Q:** Can fishermen take part in SEDAR?

**A:** Yes. SEDAR is an open, Council process. All meetings are open to the public. In addition, Cooperators can appoint fishermen and other constituent representatives to SEDAR panels.

**Q:** How are people appointed to the SEDAR process?

**A:** Cooperators appoint participants to the SEDAR panels for the stocks under their jurisdiction, and each Cooperator has its own process for making those appointments. Interested parties are advised to contact the Cooperator associated with a particular assessment to find out how they can get involved as a

participant. Contact information for all the Cooperators is provided at the end of these questions. In addition, SEDAR staff can help direct potential participants to the proper organization.

**Q:** How are species selected for an assessment?

**A:** Each Cooperator identifies short-term and long-term assessment priorities, using a process of their choosing. The Steering Committee then decides how Cooperator priorities will be balanced with overall regional workload to determine the timing of individual assessments. Assessments are typically scheduled two years in advance, with longer term priority stocks also indicated to allow researchers to develop updated inputs and to assess the techniques and models for use in the assessments.

**Q:** What is the difference between an assessment conducted under a benchmark, a standard, or an update approach?

**A:** The benchmark approach is used to develop first-time assessments for stocks and to incorporate new datasets or new analytical methods into existing assessments. It is the most time-consuming and intensive approach, taking around 9 months to complete, and is structured around 3 stages: Data, Assessment, and Review. This approach involves consideration of all aspects of the assessment, including its input data and specific analyses. It also includes rigorous peer review by independent experts. Benchmark projects are uniquely numbered and often address multiple stocks.

The standard approach is used to incorporate recent information into existing assessments. It is only used for stocks that have successfully been through the benchmark approach. The time allotted for standard projects ranges from 4 to 6 months. Existing input datasets are updated, and there is some leeway for consideration of new information and changes in model configuration. Standard projects typically include a single workshop that combines data evaluation and the assessment process. Peer review is provided by a Cooperator's technical panel such as a Council Scientific and Statistical Committee. SEDAR standard projects are uniquely numbered and seldom include more than a single stock.

The update approach, used strictly to incorporate the most recent information into assessment analyses, is the most rapid of the three approaches. Updates only allow for applying additional years of data to an existing assessment and are typically completed in around 3 months. No workshops are convened and no SEDAR panels are involved; instead the lead analytical agency obtains the recent information and updates the analytical model accordingly. Similar to the Standard process, peer review is provided by a Cooperator's technical panel such as a Council Scientific and Statistical Committee. SEDAR update projects are not numbered. They are listed by the year of the update with the Benchmark or Standard process documentation which developed the model framework that is updated. A particular assessment framework may be updated several times. For example, project 1, the first SEDAR assessment, developed an assessment of South Atlantic red porgy that has been updated in 2006 and 2012.

**Q:** How can I find a report or document from a particular assessment?

**A:** Documentation for each assessment is available on the SEDAR website:

[sedarweb.org](http://sedarweb.org)

Assessments are listed according to their SEDAR project number. If you know the project number, you can use the 'SEDAR Project Quick-links' or visit the 'SEDAR Assessments' page under the 'SEDAR Projects' menu. If you do not know the project number for a particular assessment, you can search for a project by species or Cooperator in the 'Find a Project' menu or look up the project number on the SEDAR Project List, available on the home page or under the 'About' menu.

**Q:** Is there a comprehensive list of all of the SEDAR assessments?

**A:** The SEDAR Project List, available on the home page or under the 'About' menu, provides a quick reference for past and future assessments. It contains information on the species and regions assessed, terminal year of data, assessment approach, and project start and completion date. This list is updated annually following the fall SEDAR Steering Committee meeting.

**Q:** Where can I find more information?

**A:** Full details on the SEDAR process can be found in the SEDAR Standard Operating Policies and Procedures (SOPPs) on the SEDAR website:  
[sedarweb.org/sedar-process](http://sedarweb.org/sedar-process)

**Q:** How can I contact a SEDAR Cooperator?

**A:** Contact information for SEDAR and its Cooperators:

**SEDAR**

[sedarweb.org](http://sedarweb.org)  
843-571-4366

**Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**

[www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)  
703-842-0741

**Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission**

[www.gsmfc.org](http://www.gsmfc.org)  
228-875-5912

**Caribbean Fishery Management Council**

[www.caribbeanfmc.com](http://www.caribbeanfmc.com)  
787-766-5926

**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council**

[www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)  
888-833-1844

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council**

[www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)  
866-SAFMC-10

**NOAA Fisheries Highly Migratory Species Division**

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>  
[800-894-5528](tel:800-894-5528)

**NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center**

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast>

305-361-4200

**NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office**

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>

727-824-5301