

2013 Operations Plan  
for the  
Fisheries Information Network  
in the Southeastern United States  
FIN

by: FIN Committee

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**2013 Operations Plan for the  
Fisheries Information Network in the  
Southeastern United States (FIN)**

January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The Fisheries Information Network (FIN) establishes a state-federal cooperative program to collect, manage, and disseminate statistical data and information on the commercial and recreational fisheries of the Southeast Region. There are two separate programs under the FIN: the Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)].

The FIN is a cooperative state-federal marine commercial and recreational fisheries data collection program. It is intended to coordinate present and future marine commercial and recreational fisheries data collection and data management activities through cooperative planning, innovative uses of statistical theory and design, and consolidation of appropriate data into a useful data base system. This operations plan implements the FIN Framework Plan for 2013. All tasks will be completed dependent upon availability of funds.

**II. MISSION AND GOALS**

The mission of the FIN is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial and recreational fisheries statistical data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Southeast Region and to support the development and operation of a national program.

The goals of the FIN are:

- To plan, manage, and evaluate data collection and management activities;
- To implement data collection activities;
- To establish and maintain a data management system; and
- To support the establishment of a national program.

The goals and objectives of FIN are found in Appendix A.

### III. OPERATIONS

#### A. Operational Activities

The tasks below cover all 2013 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a commercial activity; an 'R' denotes a recreational activity; and an 'F' denotes a commercial/recreational activity.

Task A1:        Collection of Recreational Fisheries Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective:            Collection of recreational fisheries data in the Gulf of Mexico.  
Team Members:      Gulf States, Puerto Rico, GSMFC, NOAA Fisheries  
Approach:            This task will provide for the conduct of the MRFSS survey in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and Puerto Rico for shore, for-hire, and private modes. This task will provide for coordination of the survey, an intercept survey of shore, for-hire and private boat anglers to estimate angler catch using the existing MRFSS methodology, and entry of the data. The states will also conduct weekly telephone calls to a 10% random sample of the Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida charter boat captains to obtain estimates of charter boat fishing effort. The NOAA Fisheries and GSMFC will produce expanded estimates of catch and effort by wave using the existing MRFSS methodology. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.  
Resources:          Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.  
Product:              Collection of recreational fisheries data for the Gulf of Mexico.  
Schedule:             This is an on-going task.

Task A2:        Design, Implementation and Maintenance of Data Management System (Goal 3, Objective 3) (F)

Objective:            To design, implement, and maintain a marine commercial and recreational fisheries data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).  
Team Members:      FIN and ACCSP program partners, FIN Data Base Manager, and ComFIN Programmer  
Approach:            The FIN will continue to develop the Data Management System (DMS) including the development of standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application. The FIN Data Base Manager and ComFIN Program will continue to receive routine delivery of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi (oyster, bait

shrimp and finfish data only), Alabama, and Florida trip ticket data into the FIN DMS. The Data Base Manager will also maintain the historical data in the system and provide support of outside users of the system. In addition to the commercial data, regular loads of recreational and biological data into the DMS will be accomplished. FIN will continue to work in conjunction with the ACCSP to ensure compatibility and comparability between the programs.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.  
Product: FIN data management system  
Schedule: Further development registration tracking system (vessel data) and routine delivery of data will continue in 2013.

Task A3: Implementation and Operation of Trip Ticket Programs (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Implement and operate a trip ticket program for the Southeast Region.

Team Members: Gulf States and Data Collection Work Group

Approach: For Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, this task will provide funding for the operation of their trip ticket programs. In addition, GSMFC will contract with Bluefin Data to implement and maintain electronic trip ticket reporting for Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Ultimately, all states will have operating trip ticket programs and all commercial landings will be captured via these systems. Accomplished by meetings, telephone, mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

Resources: Operational and implementation costs, telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.

Product: Gulf-wide trip ticket program

Schedule: Operations of trip ticket will continue in 2013 for Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.

Task A4: Support for State Programs to Improve the Quality and Completeness of Marine Recreational Fishing License/Registry Databases (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Support the development of state registration and/or licensing programs that will meet the requirements for development and maintenance of a complete and regularly-updated National Registry of marine recreational fishing participants.

Team Members: Gulf States, GSMFC, and NOAA Fisheries

Approach: The GSMFC will solicit proposals from each of the eligible states in its region for financial assistance projects to improve the quality and completeness of the applicant's marine recreational fishing license or registry database. Proposals should address such issues as increasing the proportion of records that have correct addresses, telephone numbers and dates of birth; develop/upgrade electronic licensing systems; implement data cleanup operations such as address validation and reverse directory lookup of missing telephone numbers; develop and implement new registries or lifetime licenses for exempted seniors; Develop measures to identify saltwater anglers in combination license data bases; develop and implement systems to update data for lifetime license holders; develop and utilize improved database designs for state license/registration data; and develop database management and data submission capability that will enable regular uploads of state data to the National Registry database.

Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.

Product: Improvement to state recreational fishing license databases for use in effort collection.

Schedule: Each partner will provide periodic updates about the projects at the June 2013 meeting.

**B. Committee Activities** (see Section E for Committee and Work Group membership)

The tasks below cover all 2013 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a commercial activity; an 'R' denotes a recreational activity; and an 'F' denotes a commercial/recreational activity.

Task B1: Development of Annual Operations Plan, 2014 (Goal 1, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Develop 2014 Annual Operations Plan including identification of available resources that implements the Framework Plan.

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: Through meetings and mail, the Committee will develop and complete an Annual Operations Plan for 2014.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time.

Product: 2014 Annual Operations Plan.

Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by spring 2013 and addressed by the Committee at the 2013 meeting.

Task B2: Development of Funding Initiatives to Establish Marine Recreational Fisheries (MRF) Surveys (Goal 1, Objective 3) (R)

Objective: Support the establishment of a long-term, comprehensive MRF surveys in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Team Members: The Recreational Technical Work Group/NOAA Fisheries/GSMFC

Approach: The Work Group has been working on this issue for several years. In 2000, the MRFSS was re-established in the U.S. Caribbean, although there were severe problems with attracting and retaining reliable intercept interviewers in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Sampling in Puerto Rico began in 2001 and is continuing to date; however, sampling was dropped in the U.S. Virgin Islands during 2001. In 2012, the GSMFC reinstated the coordination and administration of the recreational data collection activities in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, NOAA Fisheries and GSMFC personnel are exploring ways to ensure long-term collection of recreational data in the Caribbean.

Resources: Travel, copy and mailing expenses and staff time.

Product: Develop a long-term MRF surveys for the Caribbean.

Schedule: The Work Group and FIN will continue monitoring this task in 2013.

Task B3: Dissemination of Program Information (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.

Team Members: FIN Committee and staff

Approach: The Committee will distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties. Each committee member is responsible for maintaining a list of information distributed and providing that list to the staff. In addition, the MRFSS staff has developed a home page where users are able to access the MRFSS data for their use. The user is able to specify the area, species, gear, etc. that he/she is interested in obtaining. Also, the GSMFC has developed a home page that includes information concerning the FIN.

Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and staff time.

Product: Development and distribution of a fact sheet concerning FIN has been developed. Results-oriented tables were included in the FIN Annual Report in 2009 and will continue in 2013.

Schedule: This task will be an ongoing activity.

Task B4: Implementation of Outreach Program (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Implement an outreach program for FIN.

Team Members: FIN Outreach Work Group/FIN Committee

Approach: The Work Group has developed a strategy for outreach. The group

developed a draft strategy document that has been reviewed and approved by the FIN Committee. As outlined in the document, it is incumbent on the program partners to conduct outreach within their jurisdiction. The Commission recently developed an Outreach Subcommittee and FIN explored how to utilize this group for its outreach issues, as appropriate. The FIN staff will attend a variety of meetings to promote the program as well. FIN Committee will continue to work with the ACCSP in developing outreach activities.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.  
Product: FIN outreach program  
Schedule: The FIN Committee approved the strategy in June 2002. The Committee will periodically review outreach activities and institute the necessary actions.

Task B5: Assessment of Need for Trip-level Data in U.S. Virgin Islands Goal 2, Objective 2) (F)

Objective: Determine the need for trip-level commercial data in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Team Members: Commercial Technical Work Group

Approach: The Work Group needs to get feedback from the U.S. Virgin Islands participants regarding this issue. It needs to be determined if this topic is important to the USVI staff and should be pursued. Once it has been determined, an appropriate committee/subcommittee/work group will be tasked to address it. This task will be accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail costs, and staff time.

Product: Determination of the need for trip-level data in USVI.

Schedule: The Commercial Technical Work Group will address this issue (via conference call) in early 2013.

Task B6: Evaluation of QA/QC Standards (Goal 2, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Review the existing FIN commercial and recreational quality assurances/quality control (QA/QC) standards.

Team Members: The Recreational Technical and Commercial Technical Work Groups

Approach: The work groups met in 2010 to review the existing FIN QA/QC standards and determined the adequacy of the standards and made recommendations for improvements, where applicable. The FIN Committee approved the document and added the appropriate sections, as necessary. This task will be accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail costs, and staff time.  
Product: Updated FIN QA/QC standards  
Schedule: The FIN Committee will periodically review the document to ensure the protocols and policies are still valid.

Task B7: Port Samplers Workshops (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

Objective: Convene workshops of state and federal port samplers to discuss commercial data collection activities  
Team Members: State and federal commercial port samplers and GSMFC and NOAA Fisheries  
Approach: In an effort to provide a forum for discussing various issues concerning commercial data collection activities, the FIN Committee decided to convene workshops of state and federal port agents. The Gulf of Mexico workshop will be attended by the state and federal port agents from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, NOAA Fisheries and GSMFC staff as well as other interested personnel. In addition to commercial issues, the group will also dedicate some time to discuss biological sampling issues. Some of the suggested topics for these meetings include species identification workshop, trip ticket information, sampling and sub-sampling techniques and other pertinent topics.  
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.  
Product: Provide a forum for field personnel to discuss problems and issues related to commercial data collection activities. Develop a list of recommendations regarding commercial data collection activities.  
Schedule: The 2012 meeting will be cancelled due to a lack of pertinent review topics but meetings will be scheduled in future years as needed.

Task B8: Otolith Processors Training Workshop (Goal 2, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Convene an annual workshop of state and federal otolith processors to discuss issues related to analyzing hard parts (otoliths, spines, etc.)  
Team Members: State and federal processors and GSMFC and NOAA Fisheries  
Approach: In an effort to provide a forum to ensure quality control and quality assurance for otolith processing, the FIN Committee decided to convene workshops of state and federal processors. Processing personnel from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and NOAA Fisheries, GSMFC staff as well as other interested persons will attend the workshop.  
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.  
Product: Provide a forum for processing personnel to discuss problems and



issues related to analysis of age structures.  
Schedule: The meeting will be scheduled for early to mid-2013.

Task B9: Develop Methods for Validating Recreational Discards Data (Goal 2, Objective 3) (R)

Objective: Develop methods for validating the data regarding discarded recreational catch in the Gulf of Mexico.  
Team Members: The Recreational Technical Work Group  
Approach: The Recreational Technical Work Group will work in conjunction with MRIP regarding the recreational redesign activities to address this issue. Several work group members and staff are already involved in the redesign work. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time  
Product: Validation process to be used by the FIN partners.  
Schedule: The MRIP will provide periodical reports to the FIN Committee to keep them abreast of the progress on this issue.

Task B10: Identification and Evaluation of Current Programs (Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Identify and evaluate the adequacy of current and future programs for meeting FIN standards.  
Team Members: FIN Committee  
Approach: Periodically evaluate surveys based on their adequacy for meeting FIN standards and make appropriate recommendations.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time  
Product: Recommendations for commercial and recreational surveys.  
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task B11: Combining Duplicative Data Collection and Management Activities (Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Identify and combine duplicative data collection and management efforts.  
Team Members: FIN Committee  
Approach: The Recreational Technical Work Group has identified redundancies in MRF data collection and management in the Southeast Region and provided recommendations to the FIN Committee concerning these activities. From this information, the Committee will develop strategies for reducing duplicative efforts in the Southeast Region.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.

Product: Recommendations for reducing duplicative data collection and management efforts  
Schedule: This is an ongoing task.

Task B12: Evaluation of Recreational Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Periodically review the recreational catch and effort data collected under the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey methods.

Team Members: Gulf States, GSMFC and NOAA Fisheries

Approach: The Gulf States, GSMFC and NOAA Fisheries will meet about every 4 months to review the catch and effort data collected under the MRFSS methods. The group will examine the catch data looking for potential species misidentifications and outliers (overly large/small or light/heavy fish, etc.). For the effort data, the group looks at the historical data and compares it with the current wave data to determine if there are large decreases or increases. These reviews are conducted to ensure the best quality data are used in generating the recreational fishing estimates.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time

Product: Periodic review of recreational fisheries data.

Schedule: The group will meet in February/March, June/July, and October/November 2013 to review the recreational data collected during the year. Topics that need to be address include:

- Identification of geographic regions of interest for sampling;
- Examination of methods for post-stratification;
- Identify species that should be targeted by for specific surveys and implement these surveys;
- Investigate methods for improving sampling coverage of inshore tidal areas;
- Identify geographic regions of interest for recreational sampling;
- Increase recreational sampling levels Gulf-wide;
- Optimize sampling allocations to improve precision for key species;

Many of these issues are being addressed by the redesign of the recreational data collection activities. FIN should utilize these efforts to avoid duplication of effort.

Task B13: Determination of Methods for Collecting Recreational Data from Private Access Sites Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine most appropriate methods for collecting recreational data from private access sites.

Team Members: FIN/Recreational Technical Work Group  
Approach: The Recreational Technical Work Group met to determine the best method of collected data from private access sites. This issue is a major component of the recreational data collection redesign. The FIN should utilize these efforts to avoid duplication of effort. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.  
Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.  
Product: Determination of the best method of the collected these data.  
Schedule: The group will provide periodical reports to the FIN Committee to keep them abreast of the progress on this issue.

Task B14: Integration into the Stock Assessment Process (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Develop a plan that outlines the needs for stock assessment for the upcoming years as well as tracking the collection of these data.  
Team Members: FIN Committee/Data Collection Plan Work Group  
Approach: The Committee has developed a data collection plan that identifies the priority species (and associated data needed to be collected) for the state, interstate and federal entities as well as establishes sampling target levels for biological data. The plan provides guidance to the states. And the Committee has developed a feedback mechanism to the SEDAR process regarding the adequacy of the level of biological sampling. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.  
Resources: Meeting costs, mail costs, telephone costs, and staff time  
Product: Data collection plan  
Schedule: The group will meet in 2013 to review activities, develop a biological sampling annual plan, and provide recommendations to FIN regarding sampling targets.

Task B15: Feasibility of Logbooks for the For-hire Fishery (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Explore the feasibility of implementing a logbook program for the for-hire fishery in the Gulf of Mexico.  
Team Members: Recreational Technical Work Group  
Approach: In conjunction with Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), the Work Group needs to evaluate methods for collection of catch and effort data from the for-hire industry. A pilot program was conducted in the Gulf in 2011 and FIN partners will be involved in the evaluation of the pilot. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the MRIP, where applicable.  
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.  
Product: Effective methods for collecting data from the for-hire industry.

Schedule: The work group and FIN staff will be involved in the evaluation of the MRIP logbook pilot. Preliminary results of the evaluation will be presented to the FIN Committee at the June 2013 meeting.

Task B16: Feasibility of Sampling on Finer Geographic Regions (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Explore the feasibility of recreational sampling on smaller geographic regions to take into account regional differences in fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico.

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: In conjunction with Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), Florida and the FIN staff have developed a project that examines the feasibility of sampling in smaller geographic regions. By sampling on a finer scale, data will reflect the bio-geographical variability within a large state, which will improve state-level precision and accuracy of estimates and provide granularity at the sub-regional level necessary to support data needs for state and federal stock assessment and fisheries management. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the MRIP, where applicable.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.

Product: Improved recreational fishing estimates.

Schedule: The project plan was submitted to MRIP and it was approved. Work on this project is scheduled to begin in January 2013. Status reports of the project will be provided to the Gulf Geographic Subcommittee at their March and October 2013 meetings.

Task B17: Review Detailed Effort Module (Goal 2, Objective 5) (C)

Objective: Review the existing detailed effort module for the collection of effort for the commercial fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico.

Team Members: Commercial Technical Work Group

Approach: Charge the Commercial Technical Work Group with evaluating the current commercial effort data collection methods and determining if modifications need to be made to take advantage of new technologies and methods. Issues to consider include gears/area fished combinations, finer area fished grids, etc. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the MRIP, where applicable.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.

Product: Updated commercial effort module.

Schedule: The work group will meet in 2013 and present its recommendations to the FIN Committee at the June 2013 meeting.

Task B18: Collection of Soft Tissue and Other Biological Information (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Be responsive to requests for soft tissue and other biological information, as needed.

Team Members: FIN partners

Approach: Through FIN, partners need to be aware of soft tissue and other biological information requests and collect the needed information as resources and time permits. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.

Product: Collection of needed biological data.

Schedule: As requests are made, staff will provide the pertinent information to FIN partners and they will attempt to collect the requested information based in available resources and time. This is an ongoing activity.

Task B19: Collection of Social/Economic Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Implement the collection of the social/economic data in the Gulf of Mexico.

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: The GSMFC in conjunction with NOAA Fisheries has hired a term economist to work on various economic projects including coordination of Gulf of Mexico state and federal commercial and recreational fishing economic activities; development and implementation of information collection on public attitudes, knowledge and use patterns of coastal and marine ecosystems; development and implementation of a marine angler expenditure survey for the Gulf of Mexico; development and implementation of an economic survey of the Gulf of Mexico inshore shrimp fleet; and development and implementation of an economic survey of fishing-related businesses in the Gulf of Mexico. The implementation of this module should continue and issues to consider include securing long-term funding; increasing economic data collection and support trending over time; improving coordination among management entities and developing a uniform approach for assessing the impact of management decisions and fishery disasters. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.

Product: Social/Economic data.

Schedule: The GSMFC economist will provide periodical updates about the data collection and analysis of the various economic tasks. This is an ongoing activity.

Task B20: Compilation of Metadata (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Compile metadata from the FIN partners for inclusion into a metadata database.

Team Members: FIN and ACCSP staff and FIS personnel

Approach: The Recreational Technical Work Group has worked on this issue in the past and has developed criteria for creating a metadata database. FIN has populated the metadata data base using the InPort tool. States will routinely update and/or add information to the system. The FIN has hired a part-time staff person to assist the states in compiling this information. The status of metadata compilation is a standing item on the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee.

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail costs, staff time.

Product: Development of metadata module

Schedule: The compilation of these data will be an ongoing activity and is routinely discussed by the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee. The subcommittee will provide a report to FIN at the June 2013 meeting.

Task B21: Coordination and Integration of Data Collection Efforts (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Encourage coordination, integration, and augmentation, as appropriate, of data collection efforts to meet the FIN requirements.

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: Communicate results of evaluation and recommendations regarding marine commercial and recreational fisheries surveys to the appropriate personnel.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time

Product: Communication and presentation of recommendations to ongoing programs.

Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B22: Evaluation of Innovative Data Collection Technologies (Goal 2, Objective 6) (F)

Objective: Evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies

Team Members: FIN Committee and other appropriate personnel.

Approach: Communicate results of evaluation and recommendations regarding marine commercial and recreational fisheries surveys to the appropriate personnel.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time  
Product: Communication and presentation of recommendations to ongoing programs.  
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B23: Exploration of Strategies for In-Season Quota Monitoring (Goal 2, Objective 6) (R)

Objective: Explore strategies for implementing in-season quota monitoring for the recreational fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico.  
Team Members: Recreational Technical Work Group  
Approach: This issue was identified during the 2005 facilitated session as a topic that FIN needed to reexamine. In the past, FIN has recommended that in-season quota monitoring for recreational fisheries not be implemented; however, it appears the in-season quota monitoring may become a reality so FIN needs to address this subject. The FIN will work in conjunction with the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) to explore this issue.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time  
Product: Potential strategies for implementing in-season quota monitoring.  
Schedule: The MRIP will provide periodical reports to the FIN Committee to keep them abreast of the progress on this issue.

Task B24: Improve Timeliness of Data to Support Quota Monitoring (Goal 2, Objective 6) (C)

Objective: Improve timeliness of commercial data to support quota monitoring for the commercial fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico.  
Team Members: NMFS and FIN staff  
Approach: NMFS instituted a rule in 2011 that all federally-permitted dealers are required to report their commercial landings via electronic means. NMFS, Gulf States, FIN and ACCSP staff have been working on implementing this rule. This task will be accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time  
Product: Increased electronic reporting.  
Schedule: NMFS, Gulf States and FIN staff will continue to increase the number of commercial dealers who report via electronic means.

Task B25: Implementation of Registration Tracking System (Goal 3, Objective 4) (C)

Objective: Implement a registration tracking system for FIN.  
 Team Members: Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee  
 Approach: In conjunction with the ACCSP, the Work Group will continue the development of the registration tracking system for both programs. This system will provide a unique identifier for fishermen, dealers, and vessels involved in commercial fisheries that is trackable through geographic location and time. The basic data elements have been approved. IA-Team developed a vessel registry tracking system and FIN will implement this system to begin collecting information on vessels. IA-Team is developing a similar system to be used for dealers and fishermen. This task will be accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail costs, and staff time.  
 Product: Vessel registration tracking system for FIN and ACCSP  
 Schedule: The Gulf States continue to work through the various issues and problems associated with loading these data into the system. This issue is a standing item on the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee. Once those data have been collected, data on dealers and fishermen will be compiled.

Task B26: Evaluation of Information Management Technologies (Goal 3, Objective 6) (F)

Objective: Evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.  
 Team Members: FIN Committee and industry personnel  
 Approach: Committee members will report any new technologies, which will aid in the management of marine commercial and recreational fisheries data.  
 Resources: Travel/meeting costs, conference call costs, report costs, and staff time.  
 Product: Progress reports.  
 Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B27: Implementation of Long-term National Program Planning (Goal 4, Objective 1) (F)

Objective: Provide for long-term national program planning.  
 Team Members: FIN Committee  
 Approach: The FIN Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will attend Pacific RecFIN, PacFIN, ACCSP Operations Committee, and other pertinent meetings and coordinate activities as appropriate. This task will be accomplished by mail and meetings.



Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time.  
Product: Record of coordination activities.  
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task B28: Coordination, Consistency and Comparability with Other Cooperative Marine Commercial and Recreational Fisheries Programs (Goal 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Coordinate FIN with other regional cooperative marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs and encourages consistency and comparability among regional programs over time.

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: The FIN Committee members, GSMFC staff and ACCSP staff will coordinate activities with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission as well as attend the national Fisheries Information System (FIS) meetings. The FIN and ACCSP staffs periodically meet jointly to discuss the activities that each program is involved in and where the two programs can work together. This task will be accomplished by mail and meetings.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time.

Product: Ensure adequate information exchange, consistency and comparability between all regional fisheries programs and compilation of a record of information exchange.

Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

### **C. Administrative Activities**

Coordination and administrative support of FIN will be accomplished through The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. Major tasks involved in the coordination and administration of the various levels of FIN include but are not limited to the following:

- Work closely with the FIN Committee in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation;
- Implement plans and program directives approved by the FIN Committee;
- Provide coordination and logistical support, including communications and organization of meetings for the FIN Committee, subcommittees, and work groups;
- Develop and/or administer cooperative agreements, grants, and contracts;
- Serve as liaison between the FIN Committee, other program participants, and

other interested organizations;

- Assist the FIN Committees in preparation or review of annual spending plans;
- Prepare annual operations plans under the direction of the FIN Committee;
- Prepare and/or supervise and coordinate preparation of selected documents, including written records of all meetings;
- Distribute approved FIN information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures as set forth by the FIN Committee;
- Assist in the identification of regional and geographic needs that can be satisfied through FIN activities;
- Conduct or participate in other activities as identified.

## D. Time Table

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
<b>Planning, Management, and Evaluation</b>					
FIN Committee					
Maintenance of FIN Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Framework Plan					
Review of Framework Plan					X
Operations Plans					
Development of annual operations plans	X	X	X	X	X
Support establishment of recreational licenses in PR & VI	X	X	X	X	X
Information dissemination					
Evaluate and improve current industry outreach program through use of Commission Outreach Committee		X	X	X	X
Coordinate with ACCSP and NMFS to develop outreach/education materials	X	X	X	X	X
Use Internet communications	X	X	X	X	X
Program Review					
Conduct internal program review	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Data Collection</b>					
Data components					
Review of components of fisheries					X
Needed data elements					
Assess need for trip-level commercial data in USVI	X	X	X		
Quality control/assurance					
Develop methods for validating recreational discards information	X	X	X	X	X
Develop methods for validating commercial discards information				X	X
Review of commercial and recreational QA/QC standards					X
Coordination of data collection					
Development of data collection plan	X	X	X	X	X
Expand collection of metadata	X	X	X	X	X
Full implementation of trip ticket systems for MS	X	X	X	X	X
Evaluate suitability of new data sources and integrate FIN data system	X	X	X	X	X
Continue to develop protocol for private access	X	X	X	X	X
Explore feasibility of logbook program for for-hire		X			
Identify species that should be targets for specific surveys				X	
Implement surveys for identified species					X
Evaluate detailed effort module		X	X		
Implement detailed effort module pilot				X	X
Explore development of more detailed area fished codes		X			
Improve quality and completeness of state license databases	X	X			
Implement effort surveys using national registry			X	X	X
Continue recreational sampling in Puerto Rico	X	X	X	X	X
Implement recreational sampling in U.S. Virgin Islands			X	X	X
Explore feasibility of sampling on finer geographic areas		X	X		
Implement sampling on finer geographic levels				X	X
Implement FIN Social and Economic module	X	X	X	X	X
Prioritize species for additional biological sampling	X	X	X	X	X
Continue coordination of biological sampling	X	X	X	X	X
Collect soft tissue, etc samples, as time permits	X	X	X	X	X

<b>Data Collection (continued)</b>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
Develop protocols for long-term storage of biological samples	X				
<b>Innovative collection technology</b>					
Discuss strategy for implementation of in-season quota monitoring			X		
Review opportunity to improve timeliness of data to support commercial quota monitoring	X	X			
Recommend improvements to programs			X		
Evaluate innovative data collection technologies	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Data Management</b>					
<b>Data management system</b>					
Review location and responsibility of DMS					X
<b>Hardware/software capabilities</b>					
Review hardware/software capabilities					X
<b>Data maintenance</b>	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Standard data management protocols</b>					
Implement vessel registry tracking system	X	X	X		
Implement similar system for dealers and fishermen				X	X
<b>Integration of databases</b>					
Hire metadata coordinator	X				
Identify appropriate databases for integration in DMS	X	X	X	X	X
Improve timeliness and compatibility of TX recreational data		X	X		
<b>Innovative data management technology</b>					
Evaluate innovative data management technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Test electronic field data entry		X	X		
Protect data confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Development of National Program</b>					
<b>Long-term planning</b>					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Coordination with other programs</b>					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Consistency and comparability</b>					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **FIN Goals and Objectives**

**Goal 1: To plan, manage and evaluate a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program for the Region.**

- Objective 1 To establish and maintain FIN Committee consisting of MOU signatories or their designees to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate the program.
- Objective 2 To develop and periodically review a Framework Plan that outlines policies and protocol of the program
- Objective 3 To develop annual operation plans, including identification of available resources that implement the Framework Plan.
- Objective 4 To distribute program information to the cooperators and interested parties.
- Objective 5 To conduct an internal program review at least every five years of operation to evaluate the program's success in meeting needs in the Region.

**Goal 2: To implement and maintain a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program for the Region.**

- Objective 1 To characterize and periodically review the commercial and recreational fisheries and identify the required data priorities for each.
- Objective 2 To identify and periodically review environmental, biological, social and economic data elements required for each fishery.
- Objective 3 To identify, determine, and periodically review standards for data collection, including statistical, training and quality assurance.
- Objective 4 To identify and evaluate the adequacy of current programs for meeting FIN requirements.
- Objective 5 To coordinate, integrate and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet FIN requirements.
- Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection methodologies and technologies.

**Goal 3: To establish and maintain an integrated, marine commercial and recreational fishery data management system for the Region.**

- Objective 1 To periodically review and make recommendations regarding the location and administrative responsibility for the FIN data management system.
- Objective 2 To periodically evaluate the hardware, software and communication capabilities of program partners and make recommendations for support and upgrades.
- Objective 3 To implement, maintain, and periodically review a marine commercial and recreational fishery data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs.
- Objective 4 To develop, maintain, and periodically review standard protocols and documentation for data formats, inputs, editing, storage, access, transfer dissemination, and application.
- Objective 5 To identify and prioritize historical databases for integration into the marine commercial and recreational fisheries database.
- Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.
- Objective 7 To protect the confidentiality of personal and business information, as required by state and/or federal law.

**Goal 4: To support the development and operation of a national program to collect, manage and disseminate marine commercial fisheries information for use by states, territories, councils, interstate commissions and federal marine fishery management agencies.**

- Objective 1 To provide for long-term national program planning.
- Objective 2 To coordinate FIN with other regional and national marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs.
- Objective 3 To encourage consistency and comparability among regional and national marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs over time.