



Net Gains Alliance Releases Key Metrics to Track National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Data Modernization Progress

August 8, 2022 - Annapolis, MD

Comment from the Net Gains Alliance:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is responsible for the stewardship of the nation's ocean resources and their habitat throughout 4.2 million square miles of the ocean. This work requires trusted, timely, and accessible data across a wide range of topics. Like many government agencies, NMFS has been working to modernize its data infrastructure, support a data-savvy workforce, and improve its knowledge products.

The Net Gains Alliance has been pursuing fisheries data modernization initiatives since 2017 and, while we've seen progress at NMFS, we believe there is more work to be done. Fundamentally, NMFS needs to be better positioned to take advantage of technology advances that could improve the agency's efficiency and capacity to fulfill its mission, while its teams need to be able to work across old organizational and information silos to better address emerging issues.

We believe making data infrastructure visible is an important part of supporting fisheries and ocean sustainability. That's why we created this list of NMFS data modernization metrics to highlight actions that will support NMFS' data health and advance its conservation and management capacity. We are asking NMFS to report its progress against these metrics in July 2023. The categories include Data Governance, Staffing & Professional Development, Advanced Science & Analytics, Interoperability, Improvements in Data Policy, and Public Commitments to Data Modernization. All reflect our experience with data projects in U.S. fisheries and our conversations with a wide range of members of the fisheries community.

We will be holding public discussion sessions about these metrics in the Fall of 2022 (exact dates and joining instructions will be posted on our website and communicated via social media) and will publish a report in the summer of 2023 detailing NMFS performance across all metrics (full list provided below).

If you have any questions about the project or the discussion sessions please contact info@netgainsalliance.org or call Jonathan Webster at +1 (202) 341-8704 for more information.

NMFS Data Modernization Progress Tracking Metrics

Category	Metrics
Data Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ % of NMFS units (regions and science centers) with governance programs in place ■ Establishment of national data governance council within NMFS ■ Number and distribution of briefings and other activities with data partners, including Councils and FINs
Staffing and professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of new hires (FTEs and contractors) and distribution across regions and science centers ■ Trainings and resources provided consistent with needs identified in data skills assessments
Advanced Science & Analytics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Release a publicly accessible, annotated fish image library for AI training ■ Improvements in data processing and management that increase staff capacity to deliver science and management products
Interoperability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Progress toward universal trip IDs (UTIDs) by region/fishery ■ Increased metadata and documentation for files in InPort ■ National guidelines for EM service providers
Improvements in data policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Updated data sharing policies released ■ Public discussions held on key data management and access topics ■ National stakeholder advisory panel created for electronic technologies performance standards
Public commitments to data modernization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Articulate data modernization as a priority (including as related to other priorities like climate and equity and environmental justice) ■ Dedicated/improved budget for data programs