



## NOAA FISHERIES

### Fisheries Information System Program

#### **About the Quality Management and Continuous Improvement Professional Specialty Group**

*As part of the Fisheries Information System (FIS) program, the Quality Management and Continuous Improvement Professional Specialty Group (QM/CI PSG) brings experts together from across NOAA Fisheries and our partner institutions to provide trainings; conduct workshops; promote timely, cost-effective management and policy-making; and foster a broad and enduring culture of quality throughout the fisheries data community.*

#### **About FIS**

*The Fisheries Information System program is a state-regional-federal partnership that supports sound, science-based fisheries management. FIS does so by fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration and funding innovative projects to improve the quality of fisheries-dependent data.*

#### **FIS Program Contacts**

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# Quality Management and Continuous Improvement Success Story

## Evaluating and Improving the For-Hire Survey: Value Stream Mapping Workshop

### **The Challenge**

On the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, the For-Hire Survey (FHS) gathers information from for-hire recreational vessel operators about fishing effort, or the number of trips taken by anglers on charter, party, and headboats. The data collected from this survey supplements surveys of individual anglers. It is also a factor in determining the allocation of numerous fisheries resources, and is used to support the analysis of economic impacts associated with saltwater recreational fishing.

### **The Goal**

The FHS team sought to evaluate the effectiveness—and identify areas for improvement—of all steps involved in the survey in order to enhance timeliness, quality, and accuracy of recreational catch and effort estimates.

### **The Approach**

The FHS team participated in a value stream mapping workshop to diagram the entire FHS process using additional visualization tools such as SIPOC (suppliers, inputs, process, outputs, and customers), with four specific goals:

- Improve the efficiency of the FHS processes.
- Document the FHS tasks, communications, and file transfers, and the scheduled milestones and deadlines for each. This included noting the responsible party and deliverable at each step, as applicable.
- Improve data quality going into and coming out of the FHS.
- Receive training and hands-on VSM experience that can be applied to other projects and initiatives.

### **The Outcome**

The workshop allowed the FHS team to step back and see how each element of the survey relates to all the others, and to identify opportunities for improvement and increased efficiency. By mapping the current processes, the team determined that they could reduce the number and frequency of data errors in delivered FHS data, improve timeliness of data delivery and processing by implementing automated (where able) file handling, and improve team communications through new tools that track issues and communicate to the whole team at the same time. Equally important, each workshop participant walked away with a new skill that they can bring to other projects and colleagues.

*To learn more about scheduling a workshop, funding opportunities, and the FIS commitment to enhancing the NOAA Fisheries culture of quality, visit [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/commercial-fishing/fisheries-information-system-program](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/commercial-fishing/fisheries-information-system-program).*

