



Species at Risk Program

Developing a Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk Conservation Feedback Questionnaire

1.0 Introduction

DFO is developing a Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk Conservation (the Framework) intended to identify opportunities where multi-species approaches may better support the recovery and protection of aquatic species at risk listed as Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern under the [Species at Risk Act](#) (“SARA-listed aquatic species”).

Although single species approaches will still be used where needed, improvements can be made to aspects of SARA delivery by considering the needs of multiple species collectively through multi-species approaches. The Framework will outline the principles, considerations, and best practices for implementing multi-species approaches. As an intermediary step towards drafting the Framework, this Discussion Paper has been prepared to solicit input on proposed principles, considerations, and ideas for implementing multi-species approaches.

Based on this feedback form, and other insight heard to date, DFO plans to finalize the Framework for Aquatic Species at Risk Conservation in late 2023 and early 2024.

2.0 Purpose of Engagement

DFO has developed a Discussion Paper to inform development of a final Framework. Through this Discussion Paper, DFO is seeking input on five main topics:

- **Guiding principles,**
- **Criteria for identifying opportunities for multi-species approaches,**
- **Factors to consider in developing multi-species approaches,**
- **Implementation steps, and**
- **Recommendations moving forward.**

This feedback form contains 5 questions to seek feedback on each of these topics.

3.0 Why use multi-species approaches?

Multi-species approaches include:

- **Place-based approaches** – conservation actions for multiple species at risk found in the same place, such as watersheds or marine zones.
- **Threat-based approaches** – conservation actions to address or mitigate a threat that affects multiple species at risk in a similar way.
- **Species-based approaches** – conservation actions that can be applied to multiple populations or designatable units of aquatic species at risk because they are biologically similar.
- **Ecosystem-based approaches** – conservation actions that are applied to an ecosystem as a whole, taking into consideration water, land, and living resources and their interactions.

Benefits of multi-species approaches can include the following:

- **Improving protection and recovery for more species at risk by addressing the needs of multiple, interrelated species.**
- **Leveraging efforts and resources for species at risk, beyond what would be possible by a single government, community or stakeholder.**
- **Providing the opportunity for enhanced data sharing, allowing for improving understanding of community dynamics and interactions of multiple species and their ecosystem.**
- **Benefiting many species within an ecosystem, including species not yet at risk, and other aquatic ecosystem components.**

4.0 Guiding Principles

DFO is proposing five Guiding Principles, listed below, and has drafted best practices to accompany each principle. Examples of these best practices may be found in the bullets below each Guiding Principle.



Implement multi-species approaches where they have been identified as likely to improve conservation outcomes.

- Clearly identify the reasons for grouping species and be flexible about grouping and ungrouping species when it makes sense to do so.
- Track and report on use of multi-species approaches to deliver on SARA activities.

Respect Aboriginal and Treaty Rights, incorporate Indigenous perspectives and enhance opportunities for Indigenous leadership.

- Engage with interested Indigenous Peoples to ensure that Indigenous input, knowledge and perspectives inform multi-species approaches.
- Enhance opportunities for involvement of Indigenous Peoples in multi-species recovery and conservation actions that may allow for capacity building, training, and leadership.

Form strong partnerships in conservation

- Work toward effective and diverse engagement.
- Share information and information management practices, through the creation and use of platforms to facilitate collaboration on multi-species approaches across Canada.

Develop strengthened knowledge base for decision-making

- Exercise balanced precaution in managing uncertainty with respect to the species, their interactions and their ecosystems.
- Work towards a better understanding of species interactions within an ecosystem by meaningfully considering Indigenous Knowledge and a variety of scientific sources.

Implement adaptive management

- Set clear objectives for use of multi-species approaches, ensuring that objectives are linked to improved conservation outcomes for aquatic species at risk.
- Develop performance tools & monitoring plans to evaluate the effectiveness of multi-species approaches in meeting their objectives.



Question 1: Principles

a. Do you have any suggestions for improving these principles?

b. Do you have any suggestions for best practices you would like to see incorporated into these principles?



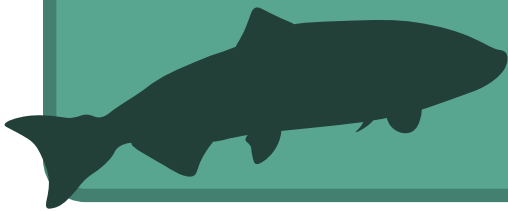
5.0 Criteria for when to apply multi-species approaches

Place-, threat-, and species-based approaches can be applied to improve overall conservation outcomes for groups of species or populations with shared habitats, shared biological requirements, and/or where common threats exist. They should be considered where these approaches are feasible, given the information, expertise, methods, and resources available.

The boxes below provide a comparative summary of conditions under which to apply single-species approaches and multi-species approaches.

Use a single species approach when:

1. Species do not share habitats or threats with other at-risk species; and/or,
2. Species require a tailored approach; and/or,
3. It is not feasible to use a multi-species approach or there is a compelling reason not to.



Use a multi-species approach when:

1. A common threat can be addressed; and/or,
2. Habitats are shared or are in the same proximity; and/or,
3. Biological, taxonomic, and/or life-cycle requirements for a group of species are similar; and,
4. Efficiencies and/or research or conservation benefits can be identified; and,
5. It is feasible and there is no compelling reason not to.





Question 2: Criteria

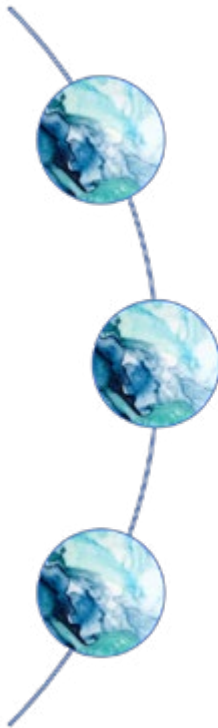
- a. Are there other criteria that you would recommend to help identify situations in which multi-species approaches should be used?



6.0 Considerations in developing and applying multi-species approaches

To help develop and apply multi-species approaches, a number of factors must be considered, including feasibility and ecological and socioeconomic considerations.

In developing and applying multi-species approaches, consider:



Feasibility factors, such as:

- Availability of information for decision-making
- Efficiency of approach: capacity, expertise and resources

Ecological factors, such as:

- Potential to address the needs of multiple species at the same time
- Potential to address species with competing needs
- Potential to address monitoring needs
- Potential to address large-scale issues such as climate change and cumulative effects

Socioeconomic factors, such as:

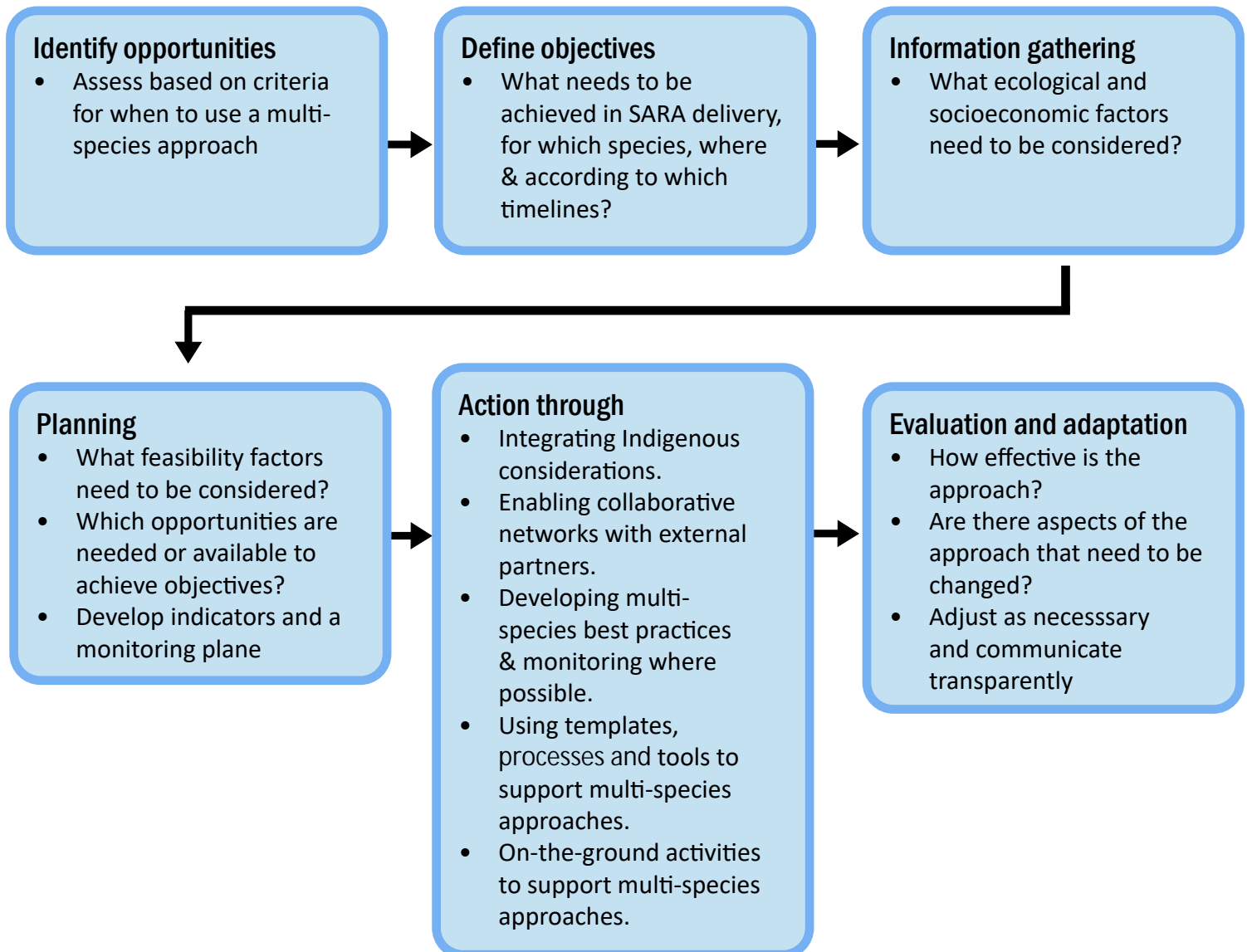
- Potential for collaboration and engagement with partners and stakeholders

Question 3: Considerations

- a. Are there additional factors you would like to see considered in identifying opportunities to apply multi-species approaches?

7.0 Steps toward the implementation of a multi-species approach

DFO has drafted general steps to follow in planning and applying a multi-species approach, as shown below





Question 4: Implementation

- a. These general implementation steps have been developed to help plan and apply multi-species approaches. Are there any changes to these steps that you would recommend?





8.0 Moving forward

In moving forward with multi-species approaches, DFO recognizes the importance of:

- Engagement in shaping and implementing the Framework.
- Developing tools to understand the effectiveness of multi-species approaches.
- Encouraging actions that are proactive and support the needs of multiple species at the same time, including those not yet listed under Schedule 1 of SARA.
 - Although delivery of SARA focuses on species listed under SARA (as Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern), multi-species approaches and actions can secondarily be broadened and designed to benefit other at-risk species, including species assessed by the [Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada](#).
- Maintaining good connections with other initiatives, so that existing activities collectively achieve common objectives related to aquatic species at risk.

Question 5: Moving forward

a. Are there any other comments you would like to provide?

b. Would you or your organization like to be involved as we move forward to develop the Framework?

I would like to continue receiving information on this initiative

I am not interested in being involved

c. If you would like to continue being involved, may we reach out to you in the future with information?

Yes. My contact information is:

I am not interested in being involved