



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# Determining, Documenting and Using the Best Scientific Information Available

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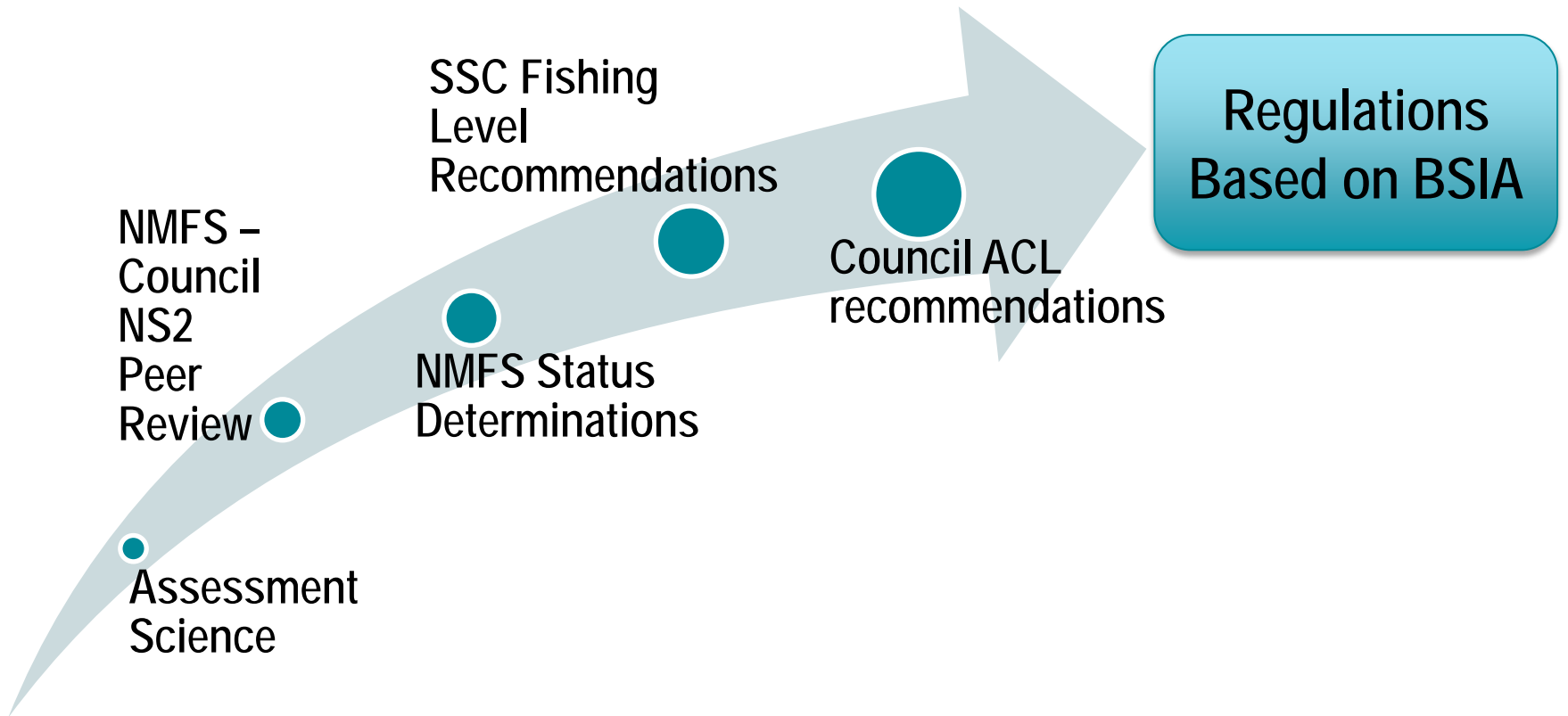
Jane DiCosimo, presenter

NMFS Office of Science & Technology

Council Coordinating Committee

May 2016

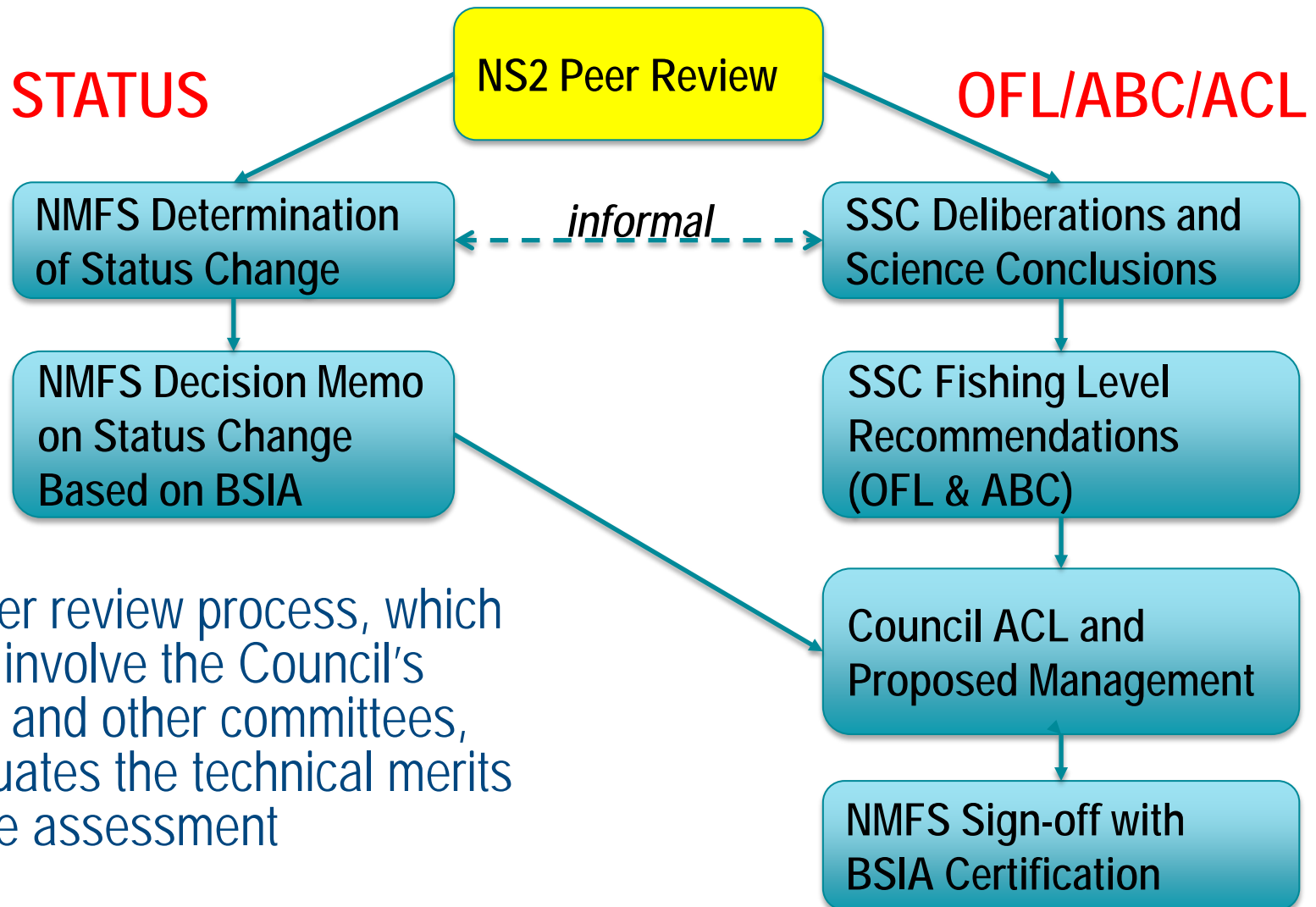
# National Standard 2: Best Scientific Information Available – BSIA



# Building Blocks for BSIA

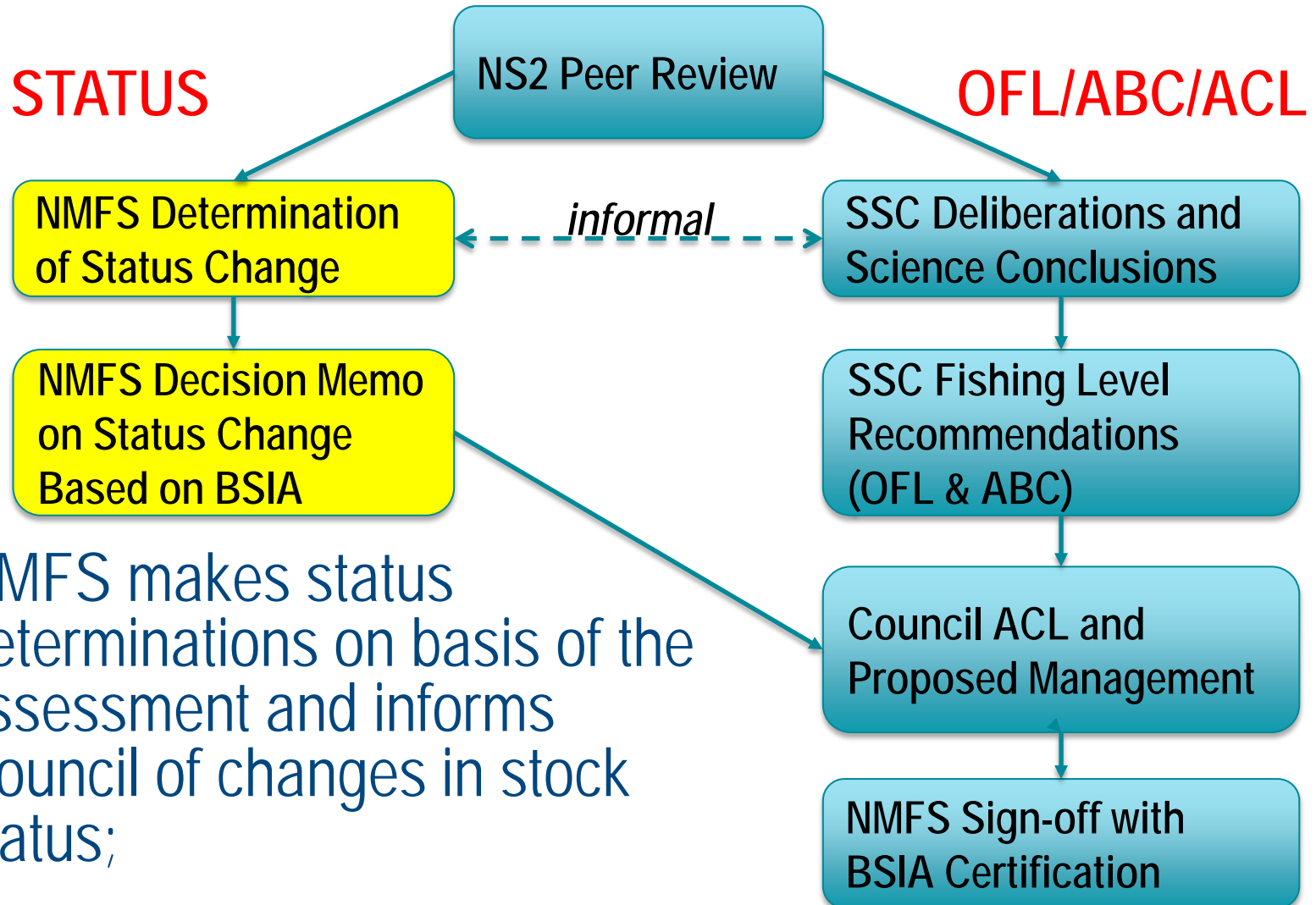
- Assessment Science
  - NMFS Stock Assessment Improvement Plan
  - National SSC Workshops
  - Reviews of 100s of Assessments
- Peer Review Process
  - SAW/SARC, STAR, SEDAR, WPSAR, AKSAR
  - NS2 Guidelines
  - National SSC Workshops
  - Federal Register Notice in process
- But – How does this formally result in BSIA?

# Pathway to BSIA



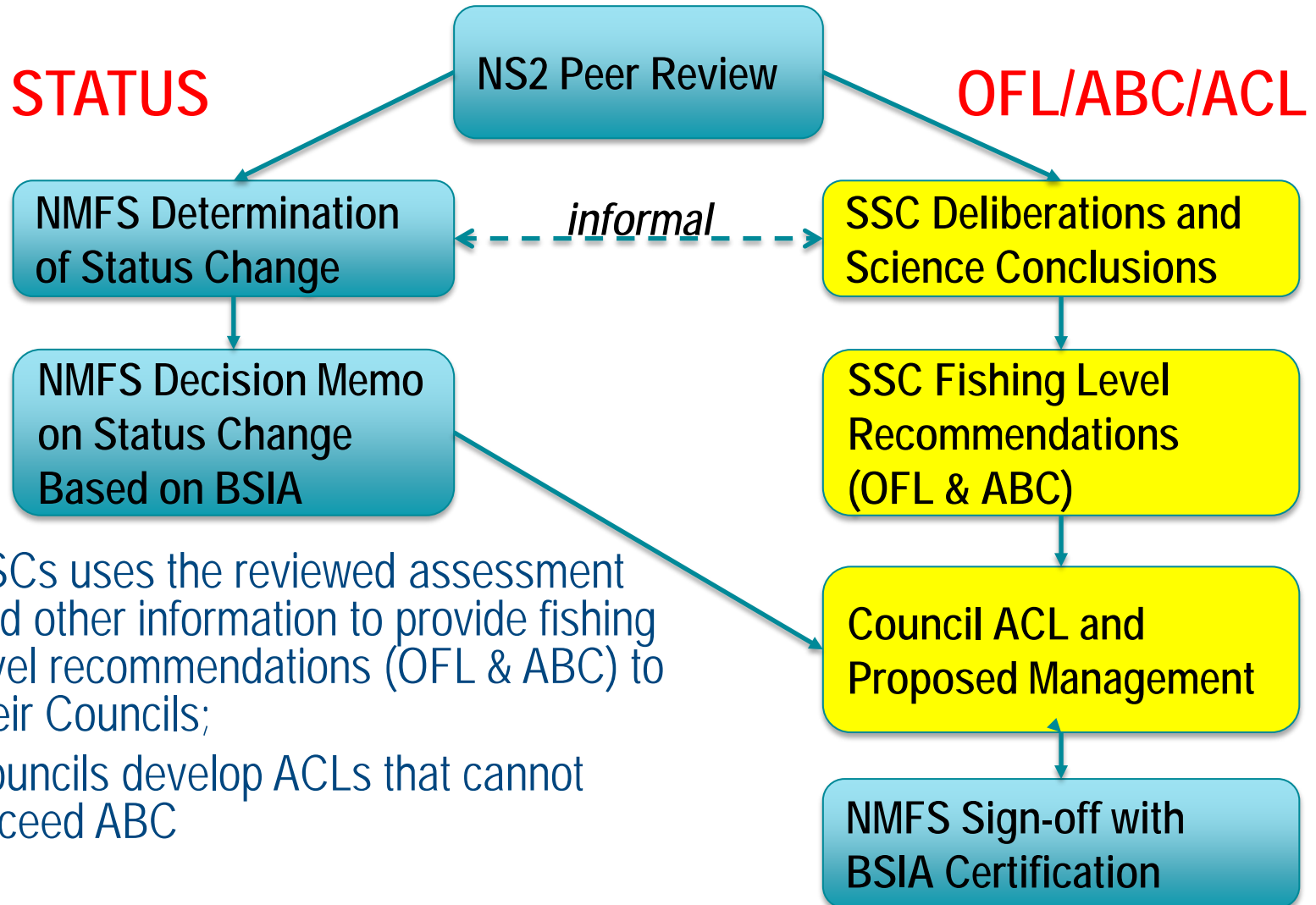
A peer review process, which may involve the Council's SSC and other committees, evaluates the technical merits of the assessment

# Pathway to BSIA



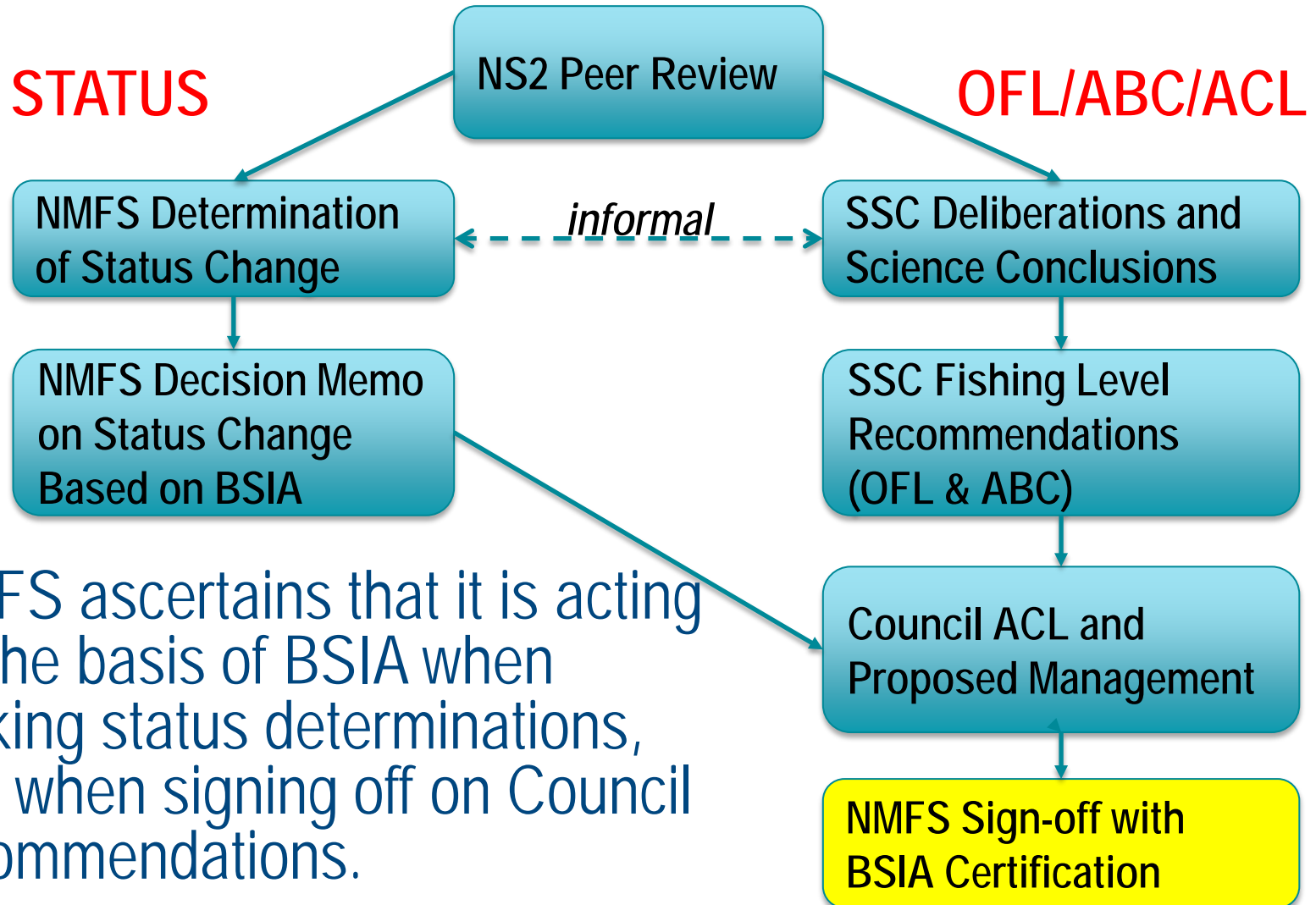
NMFS makes status determinations on basis of the assessment and informs Council of changes in stock status;

# Pathway to BSIA



SSCs uses the reviewed assessment and other information to provide fishing level recommendations (OFL & ABC) to their Councils;  
Councils develop ACLs that cannot exceed ABC

# Pathway to BSIA



NMFS ascertains that it is acting on the basis of BSIA when making status determinations, and when signing off on Council recommendations.

# Key Regional Clarifications Sought

- When is the science process completed?
  - With draft assessment?, after peer review?, after SSC acceptance?
- How should SSC's state their acceptance of the quality of the science product before NMFS has made BSIA determination?
- How do SSC deliberations at status and BSIA contribute to NMFS making a status change and a BSIA determination?



# White Paper Outline

- Calls for amendment of regional agreement to implementation of these guidelines
- Draft White Paper Covers:
  - Assessments
  - Peer Review
  - NMFS Status Determination
  - SSC Fishing Level Recommendations
  - Council Management Actions
  - NMFS Review and Implementation
  - SAFE Documentation

# Document Scope

- Assessments, Status Determinations, and Harvest Levels for managed fish and shellfish in MSA FMPs
  - Not other aspects of fishery science and management (e.g. allocations, habitat, gear, etc.)
- Internationally assessed and managed stocks have RFMO specific protocols, so not addressed here

# Draft Recommendations

1. Assessments should include fallback alternatives to the most advanced interpretations considered so rejection is never all or nothing
2. Acceptance of portions of assessments is acceptable
3. Where assessments contain multiple scenarios accepted as plausible by review process, documentation of rationale for recommendations is especially important
4. Peer review process needs to clearly conclude before management recommendations are made, especially where SSC is highly involved in review;
5. SSC post-peer review deliberations on stock status and science quality contribute to NMFS final **BSIA** determination;
6. Council action on ACLs etc. can proceed in parallel with NMFS documentation of status changes, after science process is concluded;
7. Amendment of each Council's SOPP and/or Regional Operating Agreement with NMFS is a reasonable place to address issues raised here