



# Communities Project Phase I: Place-Based Identification and Characterization of South Atlantic Fishing Communities

## Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

### Description

Phase I of the Communities Project is designed to build on the Council's longstanding history of engagement with fishing communities by strengthening and refining its understanding of who those communities are and how they are affected by management decisions. This phase focuses on the place-based identification and characterization of communities impacted by South Atlantic Fishery Management Council actions, using existing social, economic, and environmental data at a finer geographic scale than currently available. It examines communities' connections to Council-managed species and assesses vulnerabilities related to ecosystem change, such as sea level rise, storm impacts, and shifts in fish distribution. The resulting analysis, data products, and visual tools provide the Council with a clearer, more nuanced picture of fishing communities across the region, creating a strong evidence base to support more targeted outreach, communication, and management efforts in Phase II and beyond.

For more information please see the [Phase I RFP](#).

### Progress Updates

- The Phase I request for proposals was opened on Dec. 5, 2025 and closed on January 16, 2026.
- The proposal review and selection process is now underway and is expected to be complete by early March.

### Project Team

*Contractor:* TBD

*Oversight Team:* TBD

### Anticipated Timeline

2025

- ✓ **Dec-** Request for proposals released.

2026

- ✓ **Jan/Feb -** Proposals reviewed and contractor selected; Project Begins
- Mar -** Project Oversight Team to be formed and quarterly meetings begun

2027

- April -** Draft report presented to Social and Economic Panel
- June -** All reports and presentations completed.

Implementation of project outcomes begins.



# Communities Project Phase II: Stakeholder Outreach and Communication Assessment and Strategic Plan Development

## Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

### Description

Phase II of the Communities Project focuses on turning the community knowledge developed in Phase I into a practical, relationship-driven outreach and communication strategy for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Building on identified fishing communities and their characteristics, this phase conducts a targeted stakeholder outreach and communication assessment to understand how communities prefer to receive information, engage with the Council, and contribute local knowledge. The work culminates in a strategic Outreach and Communication Plan and supporting tools—such as guidance materials, training, and an online communication hub—that help Council members and staff more consistently and effectively integrate community perspectives into management decisions. By emphasizing trust-building, clear communication, and actionable qualitative data, Phase II is designed to strengthen engagement with underrepresented stakeholders and support adaptive, community-informed fisheries management across the South Atlantic region.

For more information please see the [Phase II RFP](#).

### Progress Updates

- The Phase II request for proposals was opened on Dec. 5, 2025 and closed on January 16, 2026.
- The proposal review and selection process is now underway and is expected to be complete by early March.

### Project Team

*Contractor:* TBD

*Oversight Team:* TBD

### Anticipated Timeline

**2025**



**Dec-** Request for proposals released.

**2026**



**Jan/Feb -** Proposals reviewed and contractor selected; Project Begins

**Mar -** Project Oversight Team to be formed and quarterly meetings begun

**Oct -** Draft Stakeholder Assessment report presented to Social and Economic Panel

**2027**



**April -** Draft Outreach and Communication Plan presented to Outreach and Communication Advisory Panel

**Sept -** All final reports presented to Council

Implementation of project outcomes begins.