



# SAFMC Fishery Management Process Review

## Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

### Description

This project aims to enhance the Council’s responsiveness to changing fisheries and ecosystems by improving regulatory processes and governance structures. It will focus on three objectives: resolving regulatory bottlenecks, optimizing the Council’s committee structure and coordination, and developing a more robust risk policy framework. The study includes internal assessments and comparisons with other Councils to ensure recommendations reflect best practices and legal obligations under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, NEPA, and APA. Case studies of recent amendments will help illustrate challenges and opportunities. Stakeholder engagement is central, involving a wide range of Council and industry participants. The outcomes will provide strategies for more adaptive management in evolving ecosystems and regulatory contexts. Project outcomes and recommendations will be coordinated with the Ecosystem Information Review project.

### Progress Updates

- The kick-off Project Oversight Team meeting was held in September. The project oversight team (listed below) is composed of representatives from federal fisheries management partners across the East and Gulf coasts.
- Contractors developed and submitted for review the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, Interview Implementation Guide and Tool, and are continuing to collaborate with OT to refine the AI-supported FMP Development Tracker.
- The first project report, Process Mapping and Case Study will be submitted in December.

### Project Team

*Contractors:* Aaron Kornbluth, Purcie Bennett-Nickerson, and Steve Poland

*Oversight Team:* Myra Brouwer, John Hadley, Michelle Walsh (NOAA SERO), Michelle Bachman (NEFMC), Kiley Dancy (MAFMC), Verena Wang (Gulf Council), Chip Collier, Lara Klibansky

### Project Timeline

#### 2025

- ✓ **Jun** - Request for proposals released.
- ✓ **Jul/Aug** - Proposals reviewed and contractor selected
- ✓ **Aug** - Project Oversight Team formed; Begin Phase 1: Comprehensive Assessment and Analysis
- ✓ **Sept** - Begin quarterly Project Oversight Team meetings; Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Interview Implementation Guide and Tool Submitted
- ✓ **Oct** - Dashboard to track FMP development
- ✓ **Dec** - Report on Process Mapping and Case Study;

#### 2026

- Feb** - Report on Bottlenecks, Benchmarking, and NEPA Efficiency
- Jun** - Report on Committee Structures and Comparison
- Dec** - Report on Risk Policy Framework

#### 2027

- Jan** - Begin Phase 2: Synthesis and Recommendation Development
  - Mar** - Completion of Final Report and Presentation to Council
- Implementation begins with the Council reviewing and considering the approval of project outcomes and recommendations.