



## **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

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Trish Murphey, Chair | Jessica McCawley, Vice Chair  
John Carmichael, Executive Director

### **Request for Proposals Ecosystem Information Review and Strategy Development for More Resilient Fisheries**

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) is seeking a contractor to conduct an ecosystem information review and develop recommendations for ways to incorporate ecosystem information into SAFMC fisheries management processes.

**Proposal Submission Deadline:** June 30, 2025

#### **Background:**

In 2021, the SAFMC partnered with the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to undertake the East Coast Scenario Planning Initiative. Scenario planning is a strategic tool used by organizations to prepare for uncertain futures. Recognizing many current and future management challenges, like shifting fish stocks and changing ecosystems, the east coast fishery management organizations initiated this effort to identify and plan for uncertainties that may optimize future success of U.S. fisheries. The process engaged hundreds of stakeholders throughout the region and produced a Potential Action Menu that identifies options for management action that are expected to result in more responsive and resilient fisheries management and governance.

Identifying ecosystem information, both qualitative and quantitative, that regional management councils can use is a focus of the Potential Action Menu. Ecosystem data, including sea surface temperature, ocean acidification, and habitat changes, are necessary to produce practical information, such as ecosystem indicators and risk analyses. This information helps managers better understand the complex structure, function and interactions in the marine environment that can influence management outcomes. Thus, an ecosystem-based approach to management that incorporates ecosystem information into council decision-making processes allows managers to develop more holistic management strategies that are more robust to uncertainty.

The SAFMC continues to collaborate with its east coast management partners to implement actions identified in the Potential Action Menu. The SAFMC has consistently identified a lack of ecosystem information as a primary challenge to managing the fisheries within the South Atlantic region. Data needed to describe changing ocean environments and predict their potential impacts on managed species are becoming increasingly important. To achieve long-term management

success, the SAFMC must identify what ecosystem data and information are available and develop strategies to incorporate it into management processes.

### **Project Scope:**

The SAFMC is seeking a contractor to conduct an ecosystem data and information review and develop strategies for incorporating it into SAFMC fisheries management processes.

The Council seeks a contractor to:

- 1) Review the different types of ecosystem data and information including data products and decision-support tools (e.g. Ecosystem Status Reports, Climate Vulnerability Assessments, risk assessments) currently available to the regional management councils and evaluate how they are used in council management processes;
- 2) Identify opportunities and methods for incorporating identified ecosystem information into SAFMC management processes, including inter-jurisdictional management decision-making processes, and identify practical requirements for successful implementation (e.g. data quality, frequency of information updates, regional council process consistency, implementation timelines); and
- 3) Identify opportunities to continue to expand cooperative, constituent-engaged data collection and research to improve the available ecosystem information in the South Atlantic region (e.g., study fleets, cooperative research, citizen science).

The contractor will prepare a final report that documents the review process, addresses all project objectives, and provides clear and actionable recommendations for incorporating ecosystem information into management processes to improve resilience and lead to better management outcomes in the South Atlantic region.

The contractor will regularly meet with a Project Oversight Team during the project period to ensure the scope of work is addressed. The team will assist the contractor in identifying information needed and points of contact within relevant agencies to support the contractor's completion of the data review. The contractor will also participate in the SAFMC Workshop on Ecosystem Data Gaps expected to occur in fall 2025.

The SAFMC will use its external grant process to develop contract details once a proposal is selected; however, the project timeline is expected to begin in July 2025 and be completed by July 2026. The contractor will present the final report to the SAFMC in September 2026.

### **Applicant Qualifications:**

The successful candidate should have:

- Experience working in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, scientists, and managers, to seek input and develop management tools and/or recommendations.

- Background in marine, estuarine, or environmental science, fisheries or natural resource management and policy, or other related fields.
- Knowledge of federal, state, and other ecosystem data collection programs particularly related to climate indicators in the South Atlantic region, and an understanding of how this information is used in science and management processes.
- Familiarity with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Administrative Procedure Act, Federal Advisory Committee Act, Endangered Species Act, and other laws and Executive Orders that commonly apply to federal fisheries management.

### **How to Apply:**

Applicants should email completed proposals to [Chip.Collier@safmc.net](mailto:Chip.Collier@safmc.net) or submit by mail to Chip Collier, Deputy Director for Science, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Dr, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC, 29405. If submission is by email, please include the project title in the subject line. Applications must be received by 11:59 pm on Monday, June 30, 2025.

### **Proposals should not exceed 10 pages and include the following elements:**

- Executive Summary: A summary of the proposed scope of work as well as summary of the applicant's qualifications (not to exceed 1 page).
- Description of Work: A detailed plan for addressing the scope of work and deliverables described above. This should include proposed analytical approaches, a project schedule, project management, and dissemination of results.
- Proposed Budget: A detailed budget for each year of the project, not to exceed a total of \$75,000 for the full project term. The budget must include the basis for the charges (e.g., hourly rates, fixed fees) and a breakdown of expenses by category: Salary, Fringe, Supplies, Sub-Contract, and Indirect. (Note: Organizing travel and cost of travel will be the responsibility of the Council.)
- Qualifications of Applicant: A summary of the qualifications of the applicant and other team members, if applicable.
- Outside of the 10-page limit, please include up to a two-page CV for each PI and Collaborator.

### **Proposal Evaluation Criteria:**

Proposals will be evaluated based on relevance, technical merit, qualifications of applicant(s), budget, and communication of results. The SAFMC may request additional information as deemed necessary or negotiate modifications to an accepted proposal.

### **Requests for Further Information:**

Any questions regarding the RFP, please contact:

Lara Klibansky  
Resilient Fisheries Coordinator  
Independent Contractor in support of the  
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
[LaraJKlibansky@gmail.com](mailto:LaraJKlibansky@gmail.com)  
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**Disclaimer:**

1. All costs associated with the preparation and presentation of the proposal will be borne by applicants.
2. Proposals and their accompanying documentation will not be returned.
3. Respondents must disclose any relevant conflicts of interest and/or pending civil/criminal legal actions.
4. The SAFMC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, negotiate with all qualified applicants, cancel, or modify this request for proposals in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests.