



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Trish Murphey, Chair | Jessica R. McCawley, Vice Chair
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Request for Proposals

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Climate Response for Data-Limited Fisheries

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) is seeking proposals for a project to develop and apply a stakeholder-driven management evaluation framework for a data-limited and climate-vulnerable fishery.

Proposal Submission Deadline: January 15, 2025

Background:

Climate change presents a myriad of challenges to fisheries managers, particularly in cases where species are data-limited and have been identified as highly vulnerable to environmental change. Understanding and accounting for potential climate impacts is fundamental to formulating effective and sustainable fisheries management based on the best scientific information available (BSIA). The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) highlighted the specific need for additional information to support updated catch-level recommendations. Data limitations for many of the Council's managed species resulted in the SSC using landings only approaches for over 25 stocks in the South Atlantic region. Since the catch levels were originally set in 2012, new techniques have become available and may provide a more robust basis for catch recommendations. This project seeks to address these challenges and needs using a stakeholder-driven management evaluation framework to develop management recommendations for a data-limited and climate vulnerable species currently managed by the Council.

The use of stakeholder-driven management evaluation frameworks is improving the ability of managers to address data-limited species in the context of environmental change and including stakeholder needs for the fishery. The Council is tasked with developing fisheries management plans that meet the sustainability requirements, both biologically and economically, of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Many of the management decisions made in the past assumed some level of environmental stability, however, it is now necessary to account for observed and future environmental changes, and for increased uncertainty in the decision-making process. These new stakeholder-driven management evaluation frameworks provide a science-based methodology for determining sustainable harvest levels in support of informed decision making. Importantly these methods can account for data-limitations and incorporate climate information to clarify uncertainty and result in adaptive management and more resilient fisheries. A key to their success is the

engagement of stakeholders to identify and define fishery goals to guide the development and implementation of effective management strategies.

The candidate species identified by the Council for evaluation are brown rock shrimp (*Sicyonia brevirostris*) and wreckfish (*Polyprion americanus*). Both species are managed by the Council, are data-limited, and have been demonstrated as being vulnerable to environmental change. In a recent climate vulnerability assessment of species from the South Atlantic Large Marine Ecosystem, brown rock shrimp were ranked as having high climate vulnerability and are predicted to experience negative impacts to productivity or abundance because of changing climate.¹ In a separate study that assessed drivers of the wreckfish fishery collapse in Brazil, warming sea surface temperatures were identified as a contributing factor, indicating climate vulnerability of this species.² These two fisheries are also ideal due to the relatively small size (less than 10 active vessels in the commercial fishery).

Project Scope

The council seeks a contractor to:

Select Fisheries Species ~ Rock Shrimp or Wreckfish

The contractor, in collaboration with Council staff, will review information available for each of the two species, rock shrimp and wreckfish, and determine which is most likely to be successfully addressed within project constraints and with existing methods. Council staff, in collaboration with the contractor, will gather appropriate data for the project, including fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data for the selected species and relevant climate data that may inform climate-ready management strategies.

Select and Apply a Stakeholder-Driven Management Evaluation Framework

The contractor will use an appropriate stakeholder-driven management evaluation framework and apply it to the selected data-limited species to evaluate harvest control rules and recommend management strategies based on stakeholder-informed fishery goals.

Stakeholder engagement must be an essential component of any framework selected. The contractor will conduct meetings with stakeholders to gather information and input for the selected species. The information gathered will be used to identify the goals for the fishery and develop recommended management strategies for specific criteria, which will be reviewed by the Council during development.

¹ Burton et al 2023. A Climate Vulnerability Assessment for Fish and Invertebrates in the United States South Atlantic Large Marine Ecosystem. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-SEFSC-768.

² Verba, Julia Tovar, Maria Grazia Pennino, Marta Coll, Priscila F.M. Lopes, 2020. Assessing drivers of tropical and subtropical marine fish collapses of Brazilian Exclusive Economic Zone, Science of the Total Environment. 702:

As part of the evaluation the contractor will use available data and existing data-limited methods to develop sustainable management approaches for the selected species (wreckfish or rock shrimp). The developed model will undergo peer-review by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee following established peer review practices.

Present Findings

The contractor will present an initial population assessment to the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee for review and approval (April 2027). They will also present the final report including recommended management strategies during a regularly scheduled South Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting (June 2027).

Project Deliverables

The contractor will develop a report detailing the tool applied, process followed, input parameters, findings, and recommendations. The Contractor will present this information, including management recommendations to the Council for approval.

1. Report detailing the following:

- Description of the stake-holder management evaluation framework process used and the specific input parameters
- Data-Limited Stock Assessment for the selected species including description of available data and recommendations regarding future data needs
- Overview of input from stakeholders
- Description of results, findings, recommendations.

2. Presentation outlining species, methodology, findings and recommendations.

The SAFMC external grant process will be used to develop contract details once a proposal is selected; however, the project timeline is expected to begin in March 2025 and to be completed by June 2027. The SAFMC Staff will support data identification and gathering efforts, provide regional expertise, and support stakeholder meetings during the project. The timeline will include stakeholder meetings, regular check-in meetings with the Council's Project Oversight Team, and a review by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee. The final report will be presented to the full Council in June 2027.

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.
- Demonstrated experience developing and applying stake-holder driven management evaluation frameworks, preferably to data-limited fisheries.

- Experience developing fisheries simulation models, structured decision analysis, and data-limited assessments.
- Knowledge of federal fisheries surveys and data collection programs particularly related to South Atlantic species, and an understanding of how information is used in science and management processes.

How to Apply:

Applicants should submit completed proposals to Chip.Collier@safmc.net or mailed to Chip Collier, Deputy Director for Science, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Dr, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC, 29405. Please include the project title in the subject line by 11:59 pm on Wednesday, January 15, 2025.

Proposals are not to exceed 10 pages and should 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 \$300,000 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 to the request for proposal, technical merit of the project, qualifications of applicants, budget, and outreach and communication of results. The Council 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
Climate Project Coordinator
Independent Contractor in support of the

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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252-324-9954

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 Council 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.