



## **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

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

### **Request for Proposals Fishery Management Process Review: Enhancing Responsiveness for Dynamic Ecosystems**

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) seeks a contractor to review its management program and develop strategic recommendations to improve its responsiveness and adaptability to dynamic fisheries and ecosystems.

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

#### **Background:**

The [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) (MSA) is the primary law governing marine fisheries management in the U.S. Approved in 1976, the MSA extended the U.S. jurisdiction of fisheries out to 200 miles and established the eight regional fishery management Councils, creating a transparent and public fishery management process. Congress established the Councils to enable regional governance by individuals with expertise in fisheries, fishery management, and marine ecosystem conservation. The Councils develop fishery management plans and recommend management measures designed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the resources within their respective jurisdictions. The general management process follows common steps and involves requirements set forth in the MSA and other requirements according to Executive Orders (EOs) and applicable laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Administrative Procedures Act (APA).

The success of the SAFMC management plans is predicated on goals related to biological stability, economic predictability, and social continuity; however, the ecosystem has changed over time, with fish distributions changing, productivity of many stocks decreasing and iconic species no longer supporting local demand. Recognizing the need to address this change and the resulting increased environmental uncertainty, representatives from the East Coast fishery management organizations, including the regional Councils (New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic), the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), worked collaboratively and engaged diverse stakeholders through a scenario planning initiative conducted from 2020 through 2023. A major theme derived from this multi-step initiative was the need to increase adaptability and nimbleness of the process for developing or changing federal fishing regulations. By operationalizing recommendations and priority action items from the scenario planning initiative, this project will address the goal of improving the SAFMC's

responsiveness to increasingly dynamic environments and ultimately contribute to more resilient South Atlantic fisheries.

### **Project Scope of Work**

The SAFMC seeks a contractor to conduct a review of its process for developing federal fisheries regulations from early action considerations up to the submission of recommendations to NMFS. Specifically, the contractor will review and identify areas of potential improvement that may apply to the SAFMC management program, policies, and practices with the intent of expediting the fishery management process.

The project objectives are:

- (1) Review current SAFMC management processes, policies, and practices to identify bottlenecks that result in process inefficiencies. Recommend process changes, including any identified through other regional council program reviews, to alleviate the identified bottlenecks and help realize SAFMC process improvements,
- (2) Evaluate committee structure and use, then compare the SAFMC committee operations with the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and Gulf Fishery Management Councils, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and
- (3) Identify opportunities for the SAFMC to incorporate risk policies in the management process to account for increasing uncertainties.

The contractor will prepare a final report that documents the review process, addresses all project objectives, and provides clear and actionable strategic recommendations for the SAFMC to address identified inefficiencies.

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 management process review.

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 to be completed by December 2026. The contractor will present the final report to the SAFMC in March 2027.

### **Applicant Qualifications:**

The successful candidate should have:

- Experience working in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, scientists, and managers.
- Background in marine, estuarine, or environmental science, fisheries or natural resource management and policy, or other related fields.

- Extensive knowledge of the MSA, NEPA, APA, Federal Advisory Committee Act, Endangered Species Act, and other laws and EOs that apply to federal fisheries management.
- Demonstrated experience conducting internal program or process reviews and/or working with federal entities.

### **How to Apply:**

Applicants should email completed proposals to [Chip.Collier@safmc.net](mailto:Chip.Collier@safmc.net) or mail to Chip Collier, Deputy Director for Science, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Dr, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC, 29405. If submitting by email, please include the project title in the subject line. Applications must be submitted 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 \$175,000 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, Travel, Sub-Contract, and Indirect.
- Qualifications of Applicant: A summary of the qualifications of the applicant and other team members.
- 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 Council may request additional information as deemed necessary or negotiate modifications to an accepted proposal.

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

For questions regarding this RFP, please contact:

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Resilient Fisheries 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 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.