



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

- Report development continues with input from the OT and now includes sections on SAFMC Management Process Assessment, Bottleneck Meta-Analysis, NEPA Efficiency Analysis and Committee Structure and Cross-Council Coordination. Under development is the final section focused on risk policy frameworks.
- Development of an FMP Workbench is well underway, with the contractors working with Council staff to ensure regular feedback and needs alignment.
- The Contractors meet with staff monthly to review progress and discuss feedback on draft deliverables. The oversight team met in July and received a progress update. They meet next in late September.

Project Team

Contractors: Purcie Bennett-Nickerson; Aaron Kornbluth; Steve Poland

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

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 will begin with the Council reviewing and project outcomes and recommendations.