COUNCIL SOLICITING CONTRACT WORK
Northeast Multispecies ABC Control Rule Meeting Facilitation
July 24, 2023

Project Description
The New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) requires the services of an independent contractor to facilitate a meeting that will discuss draft goals and objectives for Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) control rules. This is a short-term, temporary contractor role, commencing on or about August 7, 2023, and expected to be completed by October 2023. The contractor will work closely with the Council’s Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) and the Groundfish Committee.

Project Background
The Council, in consultation with the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), is working to modify or revise its Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) control rules for the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery Management Plan. The work was prompted by continued challenges the SSC and Council face in applying the current control rules. Recent discussions on this topic occurred at an SSC meeting on May 5, 2023, and at the Council meeting on June 28, 2023.

Following these discussions, the Council initiated a framework adjustment at its June meeting, with the following motion:

That the Council initiate a Framework to consider adjustments to the Groundfish ABC control rules, including modifying or replacing the existing control rules. This work should consider the challenges identified in the decision document, ongoing revisions to the Council’s Risk Policy, and recent updates to the National Standards guidance.

At the same meeting, the Council clarified the purpose of an upcoming meeting of the Groundfish Committee:

To discuss draft goals and objectives for the ABC Control Rules that are consistent with National Standard 1, National Standard 1 guidelines and the Council’s Risk Policy.

Groundfish Committee Meeting on Thursday August 17:
The Groundfish Committee is holding a meeting to discuss possible goals and objectives of the framework on August 17, 2023. The meeting will be held in hybrid format for participants to join either in person at the Sheraton, Wakefield, MA or by webinar.
The meeting will include a facilitated session with members of the Groundfish Committee, SSC, Groundfish PDT, Groundfish and Recreational Advisory Panels, the Risk Policy Working Group, and the public to discuss developing draft goals and objectives for this action that are consistent with National Standard 1, National Standard 1 guidelines and the Council’s Risk Policy.

This facilitated session will be followed by a Groundfish Committee session for the Committee to make recommendations to the Council on possible goals and objectives for the action.

The Groundfish PDT will be preparing/gathering background materials for the meeting including:

- An overview presentation
- Draft discussion document for the Framework on ABC Control Rules
- Overview of National Standard 1 and guidelines
- Overview of the Council’s Risk Policy and ongoing work of the Risk Policy Working Group
- List of current Northeast Multispecies goals and objections
- SSC Report from May 5 meeting
- Draft goals and objectives for discussion at the meeting (as a starting point)

The Council seeks a meeting facilitator familiar with the groundfish stock assessment process and ABC control rules to run the facilitated session of the Groundfish Committee meeting. The specific outcome is a draft list of possible goals and objectives for the ABC controls rules framework for consideration by the Groundfish Committee. The Groundfish Committee will discuss the resulting list in the afternoon on the same day. The Groundfish Committee may decide to make recommendations to the Council.

Specific Tasks:

- Planning
  - Assist in drafting a detailed meeting agenda
  - Identify an approach for managing the hybrid meeting format
- Facilitating/Reporting
  - Facilitate the meeting session on goals and objectives
  - Present a summary presentation of the session to the Groundfish Committee on the same afternoon
- Summarizing
  - Prepare a meeting summary of the facilitated session to be submitted to the Council

Discussion Questions for Facilitator:

Review the draft goals and objectives list prepared by the Groundfish PDT. Lead a group discussion of the following questions:

1. Would you add any goals/objectives to the draft list? Specify/explain.
2. Would you drop any goals/objectives from the draft list? Specify/explain.
3. Do you prefer any of the goals/objectives? Specify/explain.
The contractor will work closely with the Council’s Groundfish PDT (through the PDT chair). The contractor will also be expected to brief the Groundfish Committee on the day of the meeting and to deliver a final report to the Committee. The summary report will be the property of the Council, with usage retained exclusively by the Council.

Necessary office space and equipment will be provided by the contractor; approved travel expenses will be reimbursed by the Council.

The Council expects completion of this work by October 1, 2023.

Desired Experience and Demonstrated Skills
1. Demonstrated experience facilitating meetings with large groups holding diverse opinions.
2. Familiarity with the U.S. federal fisheries management system, including a basic understanding of the key relevant statute (e.g. Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act..) and regulatory guidance. Familiarity with federal fisheries management in New England is preferred but not required.
3. General understanding of fishery management programs at the state and national levels.
4. Familiarity with the use of scientific information in the fishery management process. In particular, the successful candidate will have experience with analytic stock assessments and various ABC control rules.
5. Strong writing and speaking skills. Demonstrated ability to summarize complex policies and procedures in clear, easily read documents, or through concise verbal discussions.
6. Advance degree in a fisheries technical field, particularly in population dynamics, modelling, and stock assessment.
7. Demonstrated ability to summarize conflicting information in an objective manner.
8. Candidates employed by advocacy organizations or by organizations that are parties in fishery lawsuits related to this issue will not be considered.
9. The successful candidate will not have a conflict of interest, defined as any financial or non-financial interest which conflicts with the actions or judgments of an individual because it:
   a. Could impair the individual’s objectivity;
   b. Could create an unfair competitive advantage for any person or organization;
   c. Could create the appearance of either item listed above.

Application Submission Contact
Interested professionals are encouraged to submit a letter of interest, current resume or CV, examples of similar work completed for other organizations or publications, and budget with expected expenses. In addition, applicants should describe the approach that would be used to meet the requirements of this project, including deliverables. Travel expenses need not be included in the budget as approved travel will be reimbursed by the Council. Letters of interest and supporting materials should be received no later than August 3, 2023, and addressed to Dr. Cate O’Keefe, NEFMC, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950, or by e-mail cokeefe@nefmc.org. Questions concerning this proposal should be directed to the same address.

This work will be funded under New England Fishery Management Council Award #FNA20NMF4410001. Compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (P.L. 109-479 as amended) and the Council’s standard contract terms and conditions will be expected.
NEFMC takes affirmative action toward to ensuring equal opportunities; the Council encourages women-owned businesses, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities to submit letters of interest and other requested materials for consideration under this announcement.

Disclaimer

1. All costs associated with the preparation and presentation of the proposal will be borne by consultants submitting letters of interest.
2. Materials submitted will not be returned.
3. Respondents must disclose any relevant conflicts of interest, and will be expected to comply with all federal grant contracting requirements.
4. The Council reserves the right to accept or reject any or all letters of interest received; negotiate with all qualified potential candidates; cancel or modify the RFP in part or in its entirety; and/or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests.