



New England Fishery Management Council

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COUNCIL SOLICITING CONTRACT WORK

Planning and Convening the Scientific and Statistical Committee

Workshop on Integrating Dynamic Reference Points into Fisheries Management

November 2025

Project Description

The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) requires the services of an independent contractor to assist with planning and convening a workshop for the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) on integrating dynamic reference points into fisheries management and preparing a summary report from that workshop. This is a temporary contractor role, commencing on or about January 5, 2026, and expected to be completed by July 31, 2026. The contractor will work closely with the Council's Project Lead, Dr. Jamie Cournane, the Council's SSC Coordinator, Dr. Rachel Feeney, and other members of the workshop steering committee. The Council's Climate and Ecosystem Steering Committee oversees the overall project development, guided by the Council's Climate and IRA Coordinator, Michelle Bachman.

Project Background

This project aims to develop best management practices and guidelines for integrating dynamic reference points into fisheries stock assessment and management. Reference points are an essential tool for understanding the condition of a resource relative to a desired state. Allowing for changes in reference points over time is known as "dynamic reference points"¹([DOI](#)). Dynamic reference points, unlike static ones, can respond to non-stationarity in population dynamics and track time-varying populations vital rates (e.g., recruitment, m^{2} ([DOI](#))).

While scientific definitions of dynamic reference points are currently being developed, practical applications in regional fishery management plans and adaptation to climate and environmental conditions are lacking. Some practical management applications of this work include the use of phased harvest control rules, evaluating scientific and management uncertainty buffers, and reviewing performance of projection methods.

To achieve this, the SSC will convene in a 2-day workshop to identify work necessary to operationalize concepts and issues identified during two recent relevant meetings:

- The Cooperative Institute for the North Atlantic Region (CINAR) Workshop on "[Defining Biological Reference Points in a Dynamic Northeast U.S. Marine Environment](#)" (January 2024 in New Bedford, MA), and

¹ Tyler D. Eddy, Daniel Duplisea, Matthew D. Robertson, Raquel Ruiz-Díaz, C. Abraham Solberg, Fan Zhang, S.J. Cooke. 2023. Barriers to implementation of dynamic reference points in fisheries management. *FACETS* 8(1); 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1139/facets-2022-0216>.

² Aaron M. Berger. 2019. Character of temporal variability in stock productivity influences the utility of dynamic reference points. *Fisheries Research* 217: 185-197. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2018.11.028>.

- The Council Coordination Committee (CCC)'s Scientific Coordination Subcommittee (SCS) 8th National Meeting on ["Applying ABC Control Rules in a Changing Environment"](#) (August 2024 in Boston, MA).

Expected Responsibilities and Deliverables

The Council seeks a contractor to assist with planning and convening an SSC workshop and preparation of a workshop summary report. This workshop will focus on integrating dynamic reference points into fisheries management.

The workshop is being organized by a steering committee that includes SSC members, Council staff, and NOAA staff. About 25 people are expected to attend in-person with additional participation through a listen-only webinar option. The workshop will include thematic sessions, invited speakers, and case study presentations. The contractor is not expected to identify scientific themes, workshop speakers, or management recommendations.

The contractor will assist with planning all phases of the workshop, convene and attend the workshop in May 2026, and draft a workshop proceedings report. The contractor will be required to complete the following tasks:

- 1) Support the execution of the workshop, as member(s) of the steering committee.
 - a) Assist in developing a workshop agenda, format, and scope, preparation of workshop materials (e.g., overview slides for sessions), and organizing workshop logistics, including organization of any thematic sessions.
 - b) Serve as lead facilitator at the workshop with Council staff assistance as needed, including moderating discussions, ensuring meeting norms, notetaking, and encouraging engagement.
- 2) Present a preliminary summary of the workshop to the Climate and Ecosystem Steering Committee at one of their meetings in 2026 and prior to July 31, 2026.
- 3) Prepare a detailed summary of the workshop, in collaboration with Council staff.
 - a) The report should include an Executive Summary highlighting key outcomes, summaries of thematic sessions and details of group discussions, and a synthesis of workshop findings and recommendations (see examples linked above for the CINAR and SCS workshops reports).
 - b) A draft report should be submitted by June 15, 2026, and the final report should be submitted by July 31, 2026.

Necessary office space and equipment will be provided by the contractor. Approved travel expenses will be reimbursed by the Council and need not be included in the contractor's proposal. The Council will provide and set up any audiovisual equipment required to support the listen-only webinar and to make an audio recording of the meeting. The Council expects completion of this work by July 31, 2026.

Desired Experience and Demonstrated Skills

1. Demonstrated experience in facilitating and convening meetings, with ability to manage logistics for conferences or meetings with over 25 attendees.
2. Strong writing and speaking skills. Demonstrated ability to summarize complex topics and recommendations in clear, easily read documents.
3. Familiarity with the use of scientific information in the fishery management process. In particular, the successful candidate will have experience with analytic stock assessments used on the U.S. east coast and various fishery management measures developed on the basis of these assessments.

4. General knowledge and understanding of federal fisheries management, stock assessment, and catch advice recommendations.
5. Demonstrated ability to summarize information in an objective manner.
6. Candidates employed by advocacy organizations or by organizations that are parties in fishery lawsuits related to this issue will not be considered.
7. The successful candidate will not have a conflict of interest, defined as any financial or non-financial interest that conflicts with the actions or judgments of an individual because it could:
 - a. Impair the individual's objectivity;
 - b. Create an unfair competitive advantage for any person or organization; or
 - c. Create the appearance of either item listed above.

Application Submission Contact

Interested professionals are required to submit (1) a letter of interest describing the approach that would be used to meet the requirements of this project, including deliverables, (2) a current resume or CV for all personnel, (3) examples of similar work completed for other organizations or publications, and (4) a budget with expected expenses. The budget should provide an hourly rate and estimate the number of hours required to complete the work. 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 December 4, 2025**, and addressed to Dr. Cate O'Keefe, NEFMC, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950, or by email 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 #NA24NMF441C00002-T1-01. 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.

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.