



## New England Fishery Management Council

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### **COUNCIL SOLICITING CONTRACT WORK**

#### **Public Outreach Workshops**

#### **Re: Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management**

April 2023

### **Project Description**

The New England Fishery Management Council is seeking proposals from an independent contractor with significant expertise in facilitation to develop and lead two online workshops and one in-person plenary meeting between August and mid-September 2023. The workshops and plenary meeting will focus on Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management (EBFM) strategies, based on the Council's example Fishery Ecosystem Plan for Georges Bank. The goals of the workshops are to: (1) to engage with and educate fishery stakeholders about the concepts of Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management (EBFM), (2) identify potential opportunities and concerns that different stakeholders see in EBFM, and (3) to promote stakeholder participation in the further development of EBFM.

The contractor will collaborate with Council staff and the Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management Committee to develop a comprehensive agenda for each workshop. The contractor will identify and recruit knowledgeable speakers and panelists, drawn from the EBFM Plan Development Team, EBFM Committee members, Council and NMFS staff, fishers and other stakeholders, and other sources. The contractor will also develop outreach strategies to ensure effective stakeholder participation. These outreach strategies may include developing outreach materials for the Council website for general distribution.

Core themes and topics for the workshops will be as follows:

1. Goals and objectives for EBFM
2. The science behind the definition of a Georges Bank Ecosystem Production Unit
3. Building a system to set catch limits and manage fisheries in a way that accurately accounts for changes in stock productivity driven by predator/prey relationships and changing environmental conditions
4. Prototype MSE analysis of the proposed stock-complex ceilings/floors approach, focused on enabling access to healthy fish stocks and preventing stocks from being overfished and becoming a choke stock
5. Permitting and management jurisdiction options

The workshops conducted under this contract constitute the second phase of public outreach, delving deeper into the management issues, topics, and options in the example Fishery Ecosystem

Plan (eFEP). Workshops will not cover the same topics, but the plenary meeting will include and discuss issues voiced during the first two online workshops.

This is a short-term, temporary contractor role, commencing on or about June 1, 2023 and ending no later than October 31 2023 with submission of a final summary report. Three workshops (two online and one in-person plenary) are expected to be held in August to mid-September at a location to be determined, subject to the Council schedule and other events. **Note: The scheduling and execution of in-person workshops will be contingent on the CDC COVID-19 level of community transmission assessment. This may cause delays in the execution of this work.**

## **Project Background**

The Council has been developing a conceptual approach for Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management over several years, drafting an example Fishery Ecosystem Plan (eFEP) that shows how it might be carried out on Georges Bank (the general area defined as an ‘Ecosystem Production Unit’, derived from scientific data and analysis). A [recent news release](#) provides more information about the progress the Council’s has made for its EBFM initiative.

The Council aims to communicate with various stakeholders, including fishermen, conservation groups, and the research community, through these workshops as it continues to advance EBFM. More background information on the need for and desired results from EBFM public information workshops is available at: [https://d23h0vhsm26o6d.cloudfront.net/1\\_MSE-Steering-Committee-recommendations.pdf](https://d23h0vhsm26o6d.cloudfront.net/1_MSE-Steering-Committee-recommendations.pdf).

To engage the public more fully in its EBFM work, the Council intends to conduct public information workshops using the eFEP and communication materials already developed. These workshops will utilize outreach materials that clearly explain EBFM both in general terms, as described in the eFEP, and as applied to the worked example for ten fish stocks on Georges Bank. Results from the ongoing Prototype Management Strategy Evaluation (pMSE) will be available by the end of July and will be used during these Phase 2 workshops. The pMSE results will include graphical and tabular results in a final pMSE report as well as an interactive, web-based system that demonstrates how various EBFM catch management strategies achieve goals and objectives defined by the EBFM Committee and Advisory Panel chairs during stakeholder workshops. Background on the pMSE project is available in this [announcement](#) and in the following stakeholder workshops summaries: [October 13, 2022](#), [October 28, 2022](#), [December 20, 2022](#), [January 6, 2023](#), and March 16 (summary pending).

Phase 1 EBFM workshops were held in October and November 2022, wherein the Council conducted six port-based, two-hour workshops on potential EBFM strategies described in the eFEP and communication materials. The agenda for these workshops was consistent, with presentations and subsequent public discussions focusing on the following three overview presentations:

1. Introduction to EBFM
2. Management Framework and Approach under EBFM
3. The Science behind EBFM

Proposal respondents are encouraged to review the Phase 1 initial workshop [news release](#) and [summary report](#), the [eFEP document](#), and the [outreach materials](#) that the Council previously developed.

The first two Phase 2 workshops will be conducted online, followed by a single in-person plenary at a to-be-determined location. The workshops will feature existing materials as well as new presentations developed by invited experts. The objectives of the workshops are to:

- Build a greater understanding of EBFM as a tool to assess and manage fisheries
- Identify potential opportunities and concerns that different stakeholders see in EBFM  
Examples of questions we would ask are:
  - What opportunities do you see to use EBFM to improve existing assessment and management systems?
  - What do we stand to gain or lose in shifting towards an EBFM approach?
- Provide an opportunity for stakeholders to help define the next steps and build a willingness to continue participation in the process

The contractor will collaborate with Council staff to design public workshop agendas, arrange workshop logistics, and coordinate with invited experts in EBFM (who may be drawn from the EBFM PDT and Committee members as well as other sources and will be approved by the Council staff). The contractor will utilize and leverage the communications materials that have been developed by the Council (e.g. presentations, infographics, stakeholder brochures, an introductory video, etc.; see <https://www.nefmc.org/library/ebfm-public-information-workshops-and-outreach-materials>). The contractor will be expected to provide on-site support and facilitation at the three public workshops.

### **Statement of Work and Deliverables**

The following list outlines the activities and deliverables expected from the contractor. While this list is not exhaustive, a comprehensive list of deliverables will be negotiated with Council staff.

The successful candidate for this contract will work with the Council and Council staff to:

1. Develop a work plan and timeline for two public online workshops and a two-day, in-person plenary
2. Verbally provide interim progress updates to Council staff on a weekly basis to receive feedback and guidance
3. Meet with the EBFM Plan Development Team (PDT) and EBFM Committee (one meeting with each group) to understand the EBFM framework in the eFEP, ask questions, and receive feedback and guidance
4. Aid the Council in deploying outreach communications and develop and disseminate workshop announcements and support pre-workshop communications to promote public attendance and participation
5. Create a comprehensive agenda for each workshop and a two-day plenary meeting, identifying pertinent topics and themes, and identifying and recruiting knowledgeable speakers and panelists. Collaborate with Council staff to assist invited experts in creating relevant presentations. The presentations may be customized to address

specific audiences (stakeholders).

6. Prepare background materials for attendees and speakers based on the information, strategy, and management options in the eFEP, which may be augmented by information derived from other scientific reports
7. Provide logistical support for both online workshops and an in-person plenary, including creating and administering attendee registration processes, and coordinating with speakers and panelists
8. Facilitate both online workshops and an in-person, two-day plenary meeting, ensuring active participation from all attendees in the discussions, and covering all relevant topics. The plenary meeting should be conducted within two weeks of the online workshops, but no later than September 15, 2023.
9. Analyze and summarize public input and debrief with Council staff and give a summary presentation to the EBFM Committee and the Council
10. Produce written summary reports within three weeks for both online workshops and the plenary meeting, documenting key outcomes, action items, and recommendations for future work.

### **Desired Experience and Demonstrated Skills**

1. General understanding of fisheries and fishery management in the New England region, including Georges Bank fisheries which are also managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)
2. Familiarity with the use of scientific information in the fishery management process, with particular emphasis on EBFM concepts and potential application, as outlined in the Council's example Fishery Ecosystem Plan for Georges Bank (eFEP)
3. Experience interacting with fisheries managers, scientists, and stakeholders
4. Demonstrated strong writing and presentation skills with the ability to summarize complex policies and procedures in clear, easily understandable documents or through concise verbal discussions
5. Experience planning, coordinating logistics, and facilitating public meetings or workshops of up to 50 participants plus six or more invited experts per workshop
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**

Prospective individuals or organizations are invited to submit a letter of interest, along with a current resume or CV, examples of similar work completed for other organizations or publications, and a proposed budget aligned with the 10 tasks and deliverables specified above, including estimated expenses. Additionally, applicants should describe the approach that would be employed to satisfy the requirements of this project, including deliverables.

Letters of interest and supporting materials should be received **no later than close of business on May 1, 2023** and addressed to Thomas Nies, NEFMC, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950 or submitted by e-mail to [tnies@nefmc.org](mailto:tnies@nefmc.org). If you have any technical concerns regarding this proposal, please contact Andrew Applegate at [aapplegate@nefmc.org](mailto:aapplegate@nefmc.org). If you have any concerns regarding the contracting process or Department of Commerce - NOAA grant regulations, please contact Margaret Bernier at [mbernier@nefmc.org](mailto:mbernier@nefmc.org).

This project will receive funding through the New England Fishery Management Council Award #FNA20NMF4410001. To comply with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (P.L. 109-479 as amended) and the Council's standard contract terms and conditions, all requirements must be met. A copy of these terms and conditions is available upon request.

NEFMC takes affirmative action toward 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. Consultants submitting letters of interest will bear all costs associated with proposal preparation and presentation.
2. The contractor will provide necessary office space and equipment; approved travel expenses will be reimbursed by the Council.
3. Materials submitted will not be returned.
4. Respondents must disclose any relevant conflicts of interest and comply with all federal grant contracting requirements.
5. 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 its entirety; and/or change the application guidelines when it is in its best interests.