



Request for Proposals

Atlantic Chub Mackerel Stock Assessment

Proposal Submission Deadline: April 30, 2017

Term of Contract: Approximately 8 months

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) seeks a highly-qualified contractor to facilitate development of a quantitative stock assessment for Atlantic chub mackerel (*Scomber colias*) to support development of management measures for chub mackerel fisheries.

Background

The Council initiated an amendment to consider adding Atlantic chub mackerel to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squids, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). This amendment will require specification of status determination criteria for chub mackerel. Status determination criteria include the level of biomass which corresponds to an overfished status and the fishing mortality rate that, if exceeded, would result in overfishing (F_{msy} or suitable proxy). These criteria form the basis for overfishing limits (OFLs) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendations from the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). OFLs and ABCs are in turn used to develop annual catch limits.

These measures are required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The Council's Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) Guidance Document¹ outlined additional considerations for management of forage species. Atlantic chub mackerel are considered a forage species due to their schooling behavior, relatively small size, and role as prey for a variety of predators. The EAFM Guidance Document states that the Council may consider using more restrictive status determination criteria for forage species than is otherwise required.

Status determinations for stocks managed by the Council are typically based on the results of peer-reviewed stock assessments developed through the Stock Assessment Workshop/Stock Assessment Review Committee (SAW/SARC) process, facilitated by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC). Some species lack an analytical stock assessment, necessitating the use of data-limited methods.

There are no previously accepted stock assessments for Atlantic chub mackerel in the U.S. EEZ and the NEFSC has limited capacity to perform a chub mackerel stock assessment in a timeframe that would align with the planned timeline for development of this amendment. A data-limited approach may be required, given the limited amount of fisheries-independent and fisheries-dependent data on chub mackerel and the current lack of an analytical stock assessment. Given the limitations on the NEFSC's ability to take on a chub mackerel stock assessment at this time, the Council plans to work with an outside contractor to develop analyses to support the development of status determination criteria, OFLs, and ABCs for chub mackerel.

¹ Available at: <http://www.mafmc.org/eafm/>

Scope of Work

The contractor, supported by Council staff and partners with the National Marine Fisheries Service, will explore various methodologies to assess status of the Atlantic chub mackerel stock in U.S. waters and will develop analyses to support development of status determination criteria, OFLs, and ABCs for chub mackerel. Council staff will provide the contractor with relevant fisheries-independent and fisheries-dependent data. The contractor will present interim progress reports to Council staff and a subgroup of the SSC in mid to late 2017. The contractor will present a final report to the SSC in early 2018.

Contractor Qualifications

Applicants should have demonstrated experience with fisheries stock assessments, including data-limited approaches. Experience working with fisheries management agencies is preferred.

How to Apply

Applicants should submit a proposal to Dr. Chris Moore, Executive Director, by email (cmoore@mamfc.org) by 11:59 pm on Sunday, April 30, 2017. Proposals should include the following elements:

- *Executive Summary:* A summary of the proposed scope of work as well as brief summary of the applicant's qualifications.
- *Proposed Scope of Work:* A detailed plan for addressing the scope of work described above. This should include a summary of potential analysis approaches, a project schedule, a brief summary of how the project will be managed, and a list of all personnel who may work on the project.
- *Qualifications of Applicant:* A summary of the qualifications of the applicant and other team members, if applicable. Curriculum vitae should be included for all individuals who will work on the project.
- *Proposed Budget:* A detailed budget, including the basis for the charges (e.g. hourly rates, fixed fees).
- *References:* Names, full addresses, and phone numbers for three clients for whom the applicant has provided similar services to those requested.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on methodology, prior experience, references, qualifications, and budget. The Council may request additional information as deemed necessary or negotiate modifications to an accepted proposal.

Requests for Further Information

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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 Council 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.