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## Request for Proposals

### **Fishery Indicators and Synthesis of Data Sources for Key Incidental Pelagic Management Unit Species Caught by Hawaii-based Fisheries**

#### **Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council**

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The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) is soliciting proposals for a contractor to compile and synthesize fishery-dependent data sources and fishery-independent information of incidentally-caught, yet commercially important Pelagic Management Unit Species (PMUS) group of the Pacific Island Region. These species include mahimahi (*Coryphaena* spp.), ono (*Acanthocybium solandri*), monchong (family *Bramidae*), and opah (*Lampris* spp.).

#### **SCOPE OF WORK**

The PMUS of interest are managed jointly through Regional Fishery Management Organizations (and arrangements), such as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) to which the US is a member. Multi-jurisdictional science provider organizations, such as the (Secretariat of) The Pacific Community (SPC) and the International Science Committee of Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) compile data from international sources that may include accounting for these species. Given the highly migratory nature of the ancillary PMUS of interest, they are each assumed to be accounted for as a common management unit among all Hawaii-based fisheries managed under the Council's Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plan (Pelagic FEP) and their associated geographical footprint. However, Council-managed fisheries may not be a significant or leading source of biomass removals for the biologically-associated unit of stock. In such a case, biomass dynamics may not be properly estimated by many commonly used stock assessment frameworks that may be reliant on incomplete, imprecise, or inaccurate levels of catch or fishing effort associated with a particular unit of stock. National Standards 3 (NS3) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) states: *To the extent practicable, an individual stock of fish shall be managed as a unit throughout its range, and interrelated stocks of fish shall be managed as a unit or in close coordination.* Data provided by Council-managed fisheries may or may not render a formal stock assessment feasible for certain multijurisdictional and internationally-harvested PMUS given NS3 guidelines and the unit of stock for these PMUS. The Council is still beholden to manage its PMUS under other MSA National Standards, including making management decisions based on *best available scientific information.*

A proposal provided by interest parties should be a one-year project engaging the fishing community, academia, and NOAA scientists to compile, analyze, and synthesize fishery dependent and fishery-independent information to develop fisheries indicators and evaluate the

adequacy of the available information to support potential benchmark stock assessments for the four small pelagic species caught by Hawaii-based fleets. The project would provide information needed to scope out the feasibility of data-limited or data-moderate single species stock that would be suitable for management under the purview of the MSA and its National Standards. The project should identify not only feasibility of stock assessments, but also the scope of plausible management actions and accountability measures for managing these species, based on the data sources identified and analyzed.

The project should include analyses that build off of existing available information and provide improved alternatives, if application. Synthesis biological information, such as life history, should be provided as well to infer vulnerability or species-specific relative risks of overexploitation.

The award recipient should also provide a means to reproduce and update analyses in the future with a standardized data input. This platform should generate documentation and figures that could be updated in the future for incorporation in the Council's Annual Pelagic Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report. The contractor should be able to work well with Council and NMFS staff and seek their consultation throughout the project's duration.

The contractor will work closely with the Council, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC), and other partners

The contracting party will fulfill the following:

- Review literature on biology of the key incidentally caught PMUS on their life history and their ecological distributions.
- Gather and analyze data on the PMUS from available databases on catch, effort, CPUE, economic value, tagging/movement studies, stock structure, etc.
- Identify gaps in catch and effort estimates and suggest any corrections or measures
- Attend workshops or Council-organized meetings with fishers to obtain fleet and fishery knowledge to identify trend change points or anomalies in reported data sources
- Attend and participate in WPRFMC meetings and advisory groups
- Identify Council programmatic priorities and MSA Research priorities for which the project satisfies and how the project may improve the annual SAFE Report
- Identifies how the project improves upon management ability of the species under specific MSA National Standards (such as NS1, NS2, NS3, etc.)
- Provide analytical tools (R codes, etc.) and data management scheme
- A final project report to be presented to the Council and the Council Science and Statistical Committee
- Conduct bi-weekly check-in calls with project collaborators, PIFSC, and Council staff.

## **CONTRACT PERIOD**

The contract may begin September 15, 2021 but no later than October 15, 2021. The contract shall be completed no later than November 31, 2022.

## ELIGIBILITY

- Principle Investigator(s) must have a demonstrated ability to implement the project, with a background in fisheries science, biology, and/or oceanography
- Principle Investigator(s) must have a demonstrated expertise with statistical platforms such as R or SAS – or any related software packages that can perform needed exercises and provide a means to reproduce the analyses.
- The contractor must be available to start the project no later than October 15, 2021;
- U.S. Federal agencies and their employees are not eligible for contractual agreements with the Council;
- Proposals may be evaluated on a competitive basis by a review committee. The selected proposal will be funded as a contract.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The contractor will be required to submit regular progress reports, a final report, and any other deliverables to be identified in the contractual agreement. All end products, reports, and other deliverables resulting from this project must be submitted to the Council. The contractor must also formally acknowledge the Council support in all publications and presentations related to the funded project. The contractor is expected to produce a high quality analysis that is appropriate for submission to a peer-reviewed scientific journal and incorporation into annual reports. Indirect charges are not to exceed 15% for this project, per Council Indirect Cost policy found here: <https://www.wpcouncil.org/about-us/council-policies-principles/>

## HOW TO APPLY

Proposal submissions should include the following materials:

- (1) A detailed proposal expressing expertise and understanding of the subject matter described above in the scope of work with budget (*maximum 5 pages*) not to exceed \$100,000
- (2) A curriculum vitae or resume for each Principal Investigator (*maximum of 5 CVs per proposal; not to exceed 4 pages each*).

Proposals may be submitted by e-mail (attach materials in PDF files) or regular mail to:

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council  
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
Email: [info@wpcouncil.org](mailto:info@wpcouncil.org)

Any inquiries regarding this Request for Proposals should be directed to the contact information above.

## SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Proposals must be submitted and received at the Council office by **Wednesday September 15, 2021**, at 5pm Hawaii Standard Time.