

## **Statement of Work**

### **External Independent Peer Review by the Center for Independent Experts**

#### **Pacific Blue Marlin Assessment Desk Review**

**Scope of Work and CIE Process:** The National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Office of Science and Technology coordinates and manages a contract providing external expertise through the Center for Independent Experts (CIE) to conduct independent peer reviews of NMFS scientific projects. The Statement of Work (SoW) described herein was established by the NMFS Project Contact and Contracting Officer's Representative (COR), and reviewed by CIE for compliance with their policy for providing independent expertise that can provide impartial and independent peer review without conflicts of interest. CIE reviewers are selected by the CIE Steering Committee and CIE Coordination Team to conduct the independent peer review of NMFS science in compliance the predetermined Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the peer review. Each CIE reviewer is contracted to deliver an independent peer review report to be approved by the CIE Steering Committee and the report is to be formatted with content requirements as specified in **Annex 1**. This SoW describes the work tasks and deliverables of the CIE reviewer for conducting an independent peer review of the following NMFS project. Further information on the CIE process can be obtained from [www.ciereviews.org](http://www.ciereviews.org).

**Project Description:** The International Scientific Commission (ISC) will be completing a Pacific blue marlin stock assessment in July 2013. The assessment provides the basis for scientific advice on the status of the Pacific blue marlin stock and will be the foundation for international management decisions of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and its Northern Committee, and domestic management decisions by the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council (WPRFMC). An independent peer-review of the assessment will provide valuable feedback to the ISC in conducting future assessments. The Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the peer review are attached in **Annex 2**.

**Requirements for CIE Reviewers:** Three CIE reviewers shall have the necessary qualifications to complete an impartial and independent peer review in accordance with the statement of work (SoW) tasks and terms of reference (ToRs) specified herein. The CIE reviewers shall have expertise in population modeling, stock assessment, and billfish stock assessments to complete the tasks of the peer-review described herein. Each CIE reviewer's duties shall not exceed a maximum of 10 days to complete all work tasks of the peer review described herein.

**Location of Peer Review:** Each CIE reviewer shall participate and conduct an independent peer review as a desk review; therefore travel will not be required.

**Statement of Tasks:** Each CIE reviewer shall complete the following tasks in accordance with the SoW and Schedule of Milestones and Deliverables herein.

Prior to the Peer Review: Upon completion of the CIE reviewer selection by the CIE Steering Committee, the CIE shall provide the CIE reviewer contact information to the COR, who forwards this information to the NMFS Project Contact no later the date specified in the Schedule of Milestones and Deliverables. The CIE is responsible for providing the SoW and ToRs to the CIE reviewers. The NMFS Project Contact is responsible for providing the CIE reviewers with the assessment and other pertinent background documents for the peer review. Any changes to the SoW or ToRs must be made through the COR prior to the commencement of the peer review.

Pre-review Background Documents: Two weeks before the peer review, the NMFS Project Contact will send (by electronic mail or make available at an FTP site) to the CIE reviewers the necessary background information and reports for the peer review. In the case where the documents need to be mailed, the NMFS Project Contact will consult with the CIE Lead Coordinator on where to send documents. CIE reviewers are responsible only for the pre-review documents that are delivered to the reviewer in accordance to the SoW scheduled deadlines specified herein. The CIE reviewers shall read all documents in preparation for the peer review.

Desk Review: Each CIE reviewer shall conduct the independent peer review in accordance with the SoW and ToRs, and shall not serve in any other role unless specified herein. Modifications to the SoW and ToRs shall not be made during the peer review, and any SoW or ToRs modifications prior to the peer review shall be approved by the COR and CIE Lead Coordinator. The CIE Lead Coordinator can contact the Project Contact to confirm any peer review arrangements.

Contract Deliverables - Independent CIE Peer Review Reports: Each CIE reviewer shall complete an independent peer review report in accordance with the SoW. Each CIE reviewer shall complete the independent peer review according to required format and content as described in **Annex 1**. Each CIE reviewer shall complete the independent peer review addressing each ToR as described in **Annex 2**.

**Specific Tasks for CIE Reviewers:** The following chronological list of tasks shall be completed by each CIE reviewer in a timely manner as specified in the **Schedule of Milestones and Deliverables**.

- 1) Conduct necessary pre-review preparations, including the review of background material and reports provided by the NMFS Project Contact in advance of the peer review.
- 2) Conduct an impartial and independent peer review in accordance with the tasks and ToRs specified herein, and each ToRs must be addressed (**Annex 2**).
- 3) No later than January 29, 2014, each CIE reviewer shall submit an independent peer review report addressed to the “Center for Independent Experts,” and sent to Mr. Manoj Shivlani, CIE Lead Coordinator, via email to [shivlanim@bellsouth.net](mailto:shivlanim@bellsouth.net), and CIE Regional Coordinator, via email to Dr. David Die [ddie@rsmas.miami.edu](mailto:ddie@rsmas.miami.edu). Each CIE report shall be written using the format and content requirements specified in **Annex 1**, and address each ToR in **Annex 2**.

**Schedule of Milestones and Deliverables:** CIE shall complete the tasks and deliverables described in this SoW in accordance with the following schedule.

23 December 2013	CIE sends reviewer contact information to the COR, who then sends this to the NMFS Project Contact
7 January 2014	NMFS Project Contact sends the CIE Reviewers the assessment report and background documents
11–25 January 2014	Each reviewer conducts an independent peer review as a desk review
29 January 2014	CIE reviewers submit draft CIE independent peer review reports to the CIE Lead Coordinator and CIE Regional Coordinator
12 February 2014	CIE submits CIE independent peer review reports to the COR
19 February 2014	The COR distributes the final CIE reports to the NMFS Project Contact and regional Center Director

**Modifications to the Statement of Work:** This ‘Time and Materials’ task order may require an update or modification due to possible changes to the terms of reference or schedule of milestones resulting from the fishery management decision process of the NOAA Leadership, Fishery Management Council, and Council’s SSC advisory committee. A request to modify this SoW must be approved by the Contracting Officer at least 15 working days prior to making any permanent changes. The Contracting Officer will notify the COR within 10 working days after receipt of all required information of the decision on changes. The COR can approve changes to the milestone dates, list of pre-review documents, and ToRs within the SoW as long as the role and ability of the CIE reviewers to complete the deliverable in accordance with the SoW is not adversely impacted. The SoW and ToRs shall not be changed once the peer review has begun.

**Acceptance of Deliverables:** Upon review and acceptance of the CIE independent peer review reports by the CIE Lead Coordinator, Regional Coordinator, and Steering Committee, these reports shall be sent to the COR for final approval as contract deliverables based on compliance with the SoW and ToRs. As specified in the Schedule of Milestones and Deliverables, the CIE shall send via e-mail the contract deliverables (CIE independent peer review reports) to the COR (William Michaels, via [William.Michaels@noaa.gov](mailto:William.Michaels@noaa.gov)).

**Applicable Performance Standards:** The contract is successfully completed when the COR provides final approval of the contract deliverables. The acceptance of the contract deliverables shall be based on three performance standards:

- (1) The CIE report shall be completed with the format and content in accordance with **Annex 1**,
- (2) The CIE report shall address each ToR as specified in **Annex 2**,
- (3) The CIE reports shall be delivered in a timely manner as specified in the schedule of milestones and deliverables.

**Distribution of Approved Deliverables:** Upon acceptance by the COR, the CIE Lead Coordinator shall send via e-mail the final CIE reports in \*.PDF format to the COR. The COR will distribute the CIE reports to the NMFS Project Contact and Center Director.

**Support Personnel:**

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**Key Personnel:**

NMFS Project Contact:

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## **Annex 1: Format and Contents of CIE Independent Peer Review Report**

1. The CIE independent report shall be prefaced with an Executive Summary providing a concise summary of the findings and recommendations, and specify whether the science reviewed is the best scientific information available.
2. The main body of the reviewer report shall consist of a Background, Description of the Individual Reviewer's Role in the Review Activities, Summary of Findings for each ToR in which the weaknesses and strengths are described, and Conclusions and Recommendations in accordance with the ToRs.

The CIE independent report shall be a stand-alone document for others to understand the weaknesses and strengths of the science reviewed, regardless of whether or not they read the summary report. The CIE independent report shall be an independent peer review of each ToRs, and shall not simply repeat the contents of the summary report.

3. The reviewer report shall include the following appendices:

Appendix 1: Bibliography of materials provided for review  
Appendix 2: A copy of the CIE Statement of Work

## **Annex 2 – Tentative Terms of Reference**

### **Pacific Blue Marlin Assessment Desk Review**

1. Review of the assessment methods: determine if they are reliable, properly applied, and adequate and appropriate for the species, fisheries, and available data.
2. Evaluate the assessment model configuration, assumptions, and input data and parameters (fishery, life history, and spawner recruit relationships): determine if data are properly used, input parameters seem reasonable, models are appropriately configured, assumptions are reasonably satisfied, and primary sources of uncertainty accounted for.
3. Comment on the proposed population benchmarks and management parameters (*e.g.*, *MSY*, *F<sub>msy</sub>*, *B<sub>msy</sub>*, *MSST*, *MFMT*); if necessary, recommended values for alternative management benchmarks (or appropriate proxies) and clear statements of stock status.
4. Evaluate the adequacy, appropriateness, and application of the methods used to project future population status.
5. Suggest research priorities to improve our understanding of essential population and fishery dynamics necessary to formulate best management practices.