

Request for Proposals:

**Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
FY2019 Request Regional Oyster Aquaculture Research Consortia**



Issue Date: February 1, 2019

Deadline for Submissions: March 15, 2019

Proposal Schedule

- February 1, 2019: Request for Proposal (RFP) issued and distributed
- February 22, 2019: Deadline for written questions regarding this RFP
Please email questions to Michael Arredondo at marredondo@psmfc.org
- March 1, 2019: Q&A document, including the answer to the written questions posted on the PSMFC website at: <http://www.psmfc.org/procurements/blog>
- March 15, 2019: Deadline for submission of Pre-proposals
Pre-Proposals must be submitted by e-mail to: marredondo@psmfc.org
Subject line for submissions: Regional Oyster Aquaculture Research Consortia
Faxed and hard copy proposals will not be accepted.
- March 15-April 15, 2019: Pre-Proposal review
- April 15: Successful applicants notified and a full proposals requested
- June 1, 2019: Project Finalist Selected
- August 1, 2019 – July 31, 2020: Anticipated Project Period (Year One)

Funding Opportunity Description

Summary

The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC), in cooperation and funding from the NOAA Fisheries Office of Aquaculture, will be issuing approximately **\$875,000** in grants to fund Regional Oyster Aquaculture Research Consortia in the U.S. West Coast states of Alaska, California, Oregon and Washington, as well as Hawaii and U. S. Pacific Islands.

Background

For FY19, Congressional funds are available to support ongoing research for oyster production in coastal areas. Research should focus on oyster genetics, disease, environmental interactions, regulatory challenges and, economic modeling. Additionally, regional partnerships are encouraged to classify and preserve natural genetic variation in oysters. Congress recognizes that the oyster farming industry is composed of hundreds of small farmers who are unable to

fund critical research in the fields of shellfish disease, food safety, technology development, warming waters, and ocean acidification. To improve coordination and consistency, they have directed NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office of Aquaculture to find ways to engage and collaborate with industry, academic institutions, and States to conduct collaborative research to address the challenges facing this growing industry.

The overall goal of NOAA's research initiatives is to provide science knowledge for the agency's regulatory and resource management decisions and foster innovative and sustainable approaches to the aquaculture industry. By partnering with The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, NOAA is able to target this research toward specific, regionally relevant topics that will produce meaningful improvements to the industry.

The farming of oysters presents an opportunity for the seafood industry to diversify and expand production in this region. Traditional wild oyster harvest (utilizing cultch planting methods and naturally occurring reefs) has been limited in recent years for a variety of reasons, but even as wild harvest recovers, production of farmed oysters has the potential to complement wild harvest, diversify the region's seafood products, and help maintain local processing and working waterfront facilities.

Oyster farming, however, presents technical, regulatory, and market challenges. While cage culture of oysters has been underway in the Northwest and Northeast U.S. for years, such farming methods must to be adapted to local physical and water quality conditions. Coastal and marine spatial analysis may be required to locate oyster farms in areas that do not conflict with other marine uses and critical habitat areas. In addition, local, state, and federal permitting requirements and processes need to be developed or adapted to allow for expanded oyster production via cage culture and other emerging methods.

In many regions, efforts to coordinate commercial oyster farming activities with oyster restoration efforts have had some success. For example, state shellfish initiatives in Washington, California, Alaska, Connecticut, and Rhode Island have engaged shellfish farmers, environmental and oyster restoration groups, state and local agencies, foundations, and others to find ways to work together to more quickly get mollusks into coastal waters. These types of multi-disciplinary partnerships are highly encouraged.

The goal for the requested proposals is to emphasize the formation of Research Consortia to address at least one or more of the priorities listed below to advance the development and improvement of the US oyster farming industry in this region.

Research Priorities

(1) Regional oyster farm planning, siting, and/or coordination which would include:

- Identifying suitable locations for oyster farming,
- Improving regional production data and reporting

- Coordinating oyster farming activities with restoration efforts,
- Avoiding, reducing, or resolving user conflicts
- Generating state or regional oyster -focused initiatives,
- Training to ensure a qualified work force

(2) Identify regulatory constraints and challenges to oyster farming including:

- Recommending state regulations to allow for off-bottom cage culture,
- Minimizing impacts to endangered species critical habitat or marine archeological sites
- Produce science-based tools and information to answer production, environmental impact, cumulative effects, and other permitting questions,
- Developing gear modifications to avoid protected species and habitat impacts, and

(3) Identify production and technical challenges hindering full implementation of oyster farming which may include:

- Designing, modifying, and testing of production methods suitable for oyster farming,
- Implementing genetic selection programs for local stocks to improve production performance,
- Developing disease and pest mitigation methods
- Monitoring local water quality and environmental impacts on, and of oyster farms
- Development of seed stock, including tetraploid broodstock
- Development of hatchery technology to reduce larval mortality and improve efficiency

Application and Submission Information

Pre-proposals: For the first phase of this call, interested applicants should submit pre-proposals outlining the membership and organizational structure of their consortium, research objectives and proposed timeline. Upon review of the pre-proposals, the Review Committee reserves the right to perform “teaming” of multiple applicants into a single consortium. For example, if a promising proposal is lacking a critical component that could be delivered by another applicant; the Review Committee can request that both applicants collaborate on a single full proposal. In this event, both applicants will be contacted by representatives of the Review Committee to describe the proposed “teaming” and to answer questions from the applicants. In addition, solo projects (not affiliated with any Consortium) may be submitted with the Review Committee reserving the right to team the project with an existing Consortium

or fund it outright. Single applicant pre-proposals are not encouraged but will not be excluded from consideration.

Full Proposals: Applicants will be expected to secure commitments from their team members, create an administrative infrastructure for planning, coordinating, quality control, and reporting. This will be included in a draft strategic research plan for the Consortium being proposed. Consortia will need to justify their proposed research plan based on impact to the industry. Consortia should include active participation from industry, academia, and government (state and/or federal) labs which may include resource management, environmental, public health, etc. Final Awards will be made to winning Consortia for approximately 4 years at a funding level up to \$875,000 per year depending on the number of projects funded, project success and future appropriation levels.

Pre-Proposal Guidelines

Pre-Proposals should clearly outline the project objectives, general methodologies, and research outputs, qualifications of the investigators who would perform the work, where the work would be performed, and a budget outline. It is critically important to clearly and explicitly articulate how the proposed work addresses the research priorities identified in this document. Pre-Proposals should also indicate how the results of the proposed work will be communicated to interested parties and the public, and clearly define what success will look like at the end of the funding period. Pre-Proposals should not exceed 5 pages in length.

Please follow the instructions for preparing proposals for Commission awards (page 7). Applicants should be willing to work closely with the Commission staff. In the event that the Review Panel wishes to encourage “teaming”, applicants will be expected to participate in discussions with the Review Panel and any other applicants also encouraged. These discussions will be facilitated by Commission and NOAA staff.

Full Proposal Guidelines

Full proposals are expected to provide a much greater level of detail about the organizational structure and management of the Consortium being proposed. Elaborating on what was included in the pre-proposals, the Review Committee expects to see complete and specific descriptions of the roles and tasks of each participating entity, research methods and objectives (including near and long term goals), anticipated impact of the work, and a clear plan for communicating results to stakeholders and the public. A complete and detailed budget should be provided, with the understanding that adjustments may be required in subsequent years depending on research results and progress. Upon completion of the pre-proposal review,

successful Consortia will be contacted and provided with additional guidance and full proposals will be due **April 15, 2019**.

Duration, Eligibility, and Funding

Funds for this project are provided by NOAA Award No. NA18NMF4720007. If the proposal is accepted for funding, the projects must comply with all federal government audit principles/procedures and the Department of Commerce's Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. The Commission will fund proposals on a competitive basis. Researchers at U.S. academic institutions, research laboratories, for-profit companies/firms, nonprofits, and state agencies are all eligible. Proposals from foreign entities are not eligible, however funding can be used to contract foreign expertise where needed. Proposals involving multiple investigators are encouraged and expected. The majority of the proposed work should be conducted in the U.S. U.S. West Coast states of Alaska, California, Oregon and Washington, as well as Hawaii and U. S. Pacific Islands. Any U.S. federal government agencies, including Regional Fishery Management Councils, are not eligible to receive salary funding through this solicitation, but may provide "in kind" contributions to a Consortium (facilities, expertise, tools, etc...). Proposed activities will be expected to be completed within in the funding period described in any of the successful proposals.

The Commission expects to make approximately **\$875,000** available for new awards under this RFP for Year 1 (as described below), subject to the availability of appropriated funds. The Commission may, at its discretion, issue one, multiple, or no awards.

The Commission anticipates 4-years of funding for the Consortium, but all awards will be subject to the availability of appropriated funds and project success. The Commission expects the start date for funding agreements to be **August 1, 2019**, or as negotiated.

The Commission will accept pre-proposal submissions including ideas that still require proof-of-concept R&D efforts as well as those for which some proof-of-concept demonstration already exists. Submissions requiring proof-of-concept R&D can propose a project with the goal of delivering on the program metric at the conclusion of the period of performance. These submissions must contain an appropriate cost and project duration plan that is described in sufficient technical detail to allow reviewers to meaningfully evaluate the proposed project. If awarded, such projects should expect a rigorous go/no-go milestone early in the project associated with the proof-of-concept demonstration. Alternatively, submissions requiring proof-of-concept R&D can propose a project with the project end deliverable being an extremely creative, but partial solution. However, the Applicants are required to provide a

convincing vision how these partial solutions can enable the realization of the program metrics with further development.

Applicants proposing projects for which some initial proof-of-concept demonstration already exists should submit concrete data that supports the probability of success of the proposed project.

The Commission will accept only new submissions under this call. Applicants may not seek renewal or supplementation of their existing awards through this call.

The Commission plans to fully fund your negotiated budget at the time of award, subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will be required to submit semi-annual status reports on all research activities, including activity summaries, research results (when appropriate), updated budgets and any proposed changes, amendments or omissions (subject to negotiation with the Commission). At the conclusion of the performance period, a full and complete final report will be submitted to the Commission detailing all research activities, results and impacts.

Eligible Applicants

Researchers at U.S. academic institutions, research laboratories, for-profit companies/firms, nonprofits, and state agencies are all eligible. Proposals from foreign entities are not eligible. Proposals involving multiple investigators are welcome. Any U.S. federal government agencies, including Regional Fishery Management Councils, are not eligible to receive funding through this solicitation.

Content and Form of Application

Pre-proposal format must be in at least a **12 point font**. Brevity will assist reviewers and program staff in dealing effectively with proposals. Tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations are included in the **5-page limit**. Data management plans and/or access agreements as well as budgets and justifications, project summary, and previous, current and pending support sections do not count towards the page limit. Appendices may include information such as resumes and/or letters of endorsement.

Additional informational material will be disregarded.

Proposals must include the following information in the format outlined below.

a. Project summary (1-page limit, does not count towards the 5-page limit):

- (1) Organization title.
- (2) Principal Investigator(s) (PI).
- (3) Address, telephone number, and email address of Principal Investigator(s).
- (4) Project title.
- (5) Project objectives for the project period.
- (6) Summary of work to be performed within the project period.
- (7) Budget Information

- Total funds requested from PSMFC;
- Cost sharing to be provided to this project, if any (not required). Specify whether contributions are cash or in kind;
- Total project cost.

b. Project description (5-page limit): Each project must be completely and accurately described. The main body of the proposal should be a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and should include: specific objectives and performance measures for the period of the proposed work and the expected significance; relation to longer-term goals of the project; and relation to other work planned, anticipated, or underway.

c. Project Budget (does not count towards the 5-page limit): You must include in the proposal a detailed narrative for each category providing an explanation and/or process for how the funds will be used and/or allocated. Describe and justify the budget for each organization or agency requesting funding in this proposal using the mandatory budget categories listed below.

- **Personnel (including Fringe Benefits):** Include the salary detail for all employees assigned to this project. Explain the duties for each individual identified by name and position. State the time commitments such as hours and percent of time for each position. List the total charges for each person. Provide detail on all fringe benefits in correlation to the employee's hourly wage and the number of hours to be worked in association with the proposed project. Identify what types of fringe benefits are being covered. Describe the total charges for each person listed along with an explanation of how the charges were calculated.
- **Travel:** These costs include lodging, airfare, per diem, ground transportation and other directly-related expenses incurred while traveling for the purpose of the proposed project. Include each traveler's name, dates of travel, purpose of travel, destination, and itemized costs to include lodging, airfare, per diem, ground transportation, etc. Identify why the requested travel is directly relevant

to the successful completion of the project. If there are any actual trip details that remain unknown, please explain what the basis for the proposed travel charges.

- **Contractual:** Include all expenditures associated with contractually-related activities that are directly associated with the proposed project. List each contract as a separate item. Describe the applicability to the project for each contract to be acquired.
- **Supplies:** Include a description of all equipment that individually costs under \$5,000 and miscellaneous supplies and materials that are required for the purpose of the proposed project. Itemize supplies by type of material or nature of expense. Identify how the proposed supplies are necessary for the successful completion of the project.
- **Equipment:** Include items that individually cost more than \$5,000. For any items of equipment whose costs exceed \$5,000, a description of the item and associated costs is required. List each item of equipment being requested. For each item of equipment, please identify the number of units, cost per unit and total cost specified. Explain why each item of equipment is necessary for the successful completion of the project.
- **Indirect Costs:** These are costs incurred by the investigating organization as a result of administering the proposed project but not directly associated with project implementation. Indirect costs generally include space rental, utilities, postage, data processing, training, safety management, affirmative action programs, administrative support, and supervisory oversight. **NOTE: All proposals must include copy of the approved negotiated indirect cost rate document or similar verifying your indirect rate as part of your proposal package.** Our intent is that institutions undertaking research apply funds to expenses directly related to the project, and have the ability to complete the project with low indirect cost rates.

Instructions, Conditions and Notices to Proposers

1. Questions regarding this RFP shall be submitted in writing no later than **February 22, 2018** to:
Michael Arredondo
205 SE Spokane Street, Suite 100
Portland, OR 97202
Email: marredondo@psmfc.org
Phone: (503) 595 - 3100
Fax: (503) 595 – 3444

The answers to the written questions will be posted on PSMFC's website by **March 1, 2019**

2. Amendments to the Solicitation

If this solicitation is amended, all terms and conditions that are not amended remain unchanged. Proposers shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to this solicitation in Proposer's cover letter.

3. Submission, Modification Revision and Withdrawal of Proposals

a. The deadline for pre-proposals is **March 15, 2019:**

Attn: Michael Arredondo
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Portland, OR 97202
Email: marredondo@psmfc.org
Phone: (503) 595 – 3100
Fax: (503) 595 – 3444

b. PSMFC reserves the right to consult with and to consider information from its own sources, including information from state and federal agencies regarding the proposer's prior performance or the status of outstanding investigations or warrants involving the proposer.

c. Late proposals

i. Any proposal, modification, or revision at the PSMFC office designated in the solicitation after the exact time specified for receipt to offers is "late" and will not be considered unless it is received before award is made, the PSMFC Fiscal Manager determines that accepting the late offer would not unduly delay the acquisition; and

ii. There is acceptable evidence to establish that it was received at the PSMFC installation designation for receipt of offers and was under the PSMFC's control prior to the time set for receipt to offers; or

iii. It is the only proposal received.

iv. However, a late modification of an otherwise successful proposal that makes its terms more favorable to the PSMFC, will be considered at any time it is received and may be accepted.

v. Acceptable evidence to establish time of receipt at the PSMFC installation includes the time/date stamp of that installation on the proposal wrapper, other documentary evidence of receipt maintained by the installation, or oral testimony or statements of PSMFC personnel.

d. If an emergency or unanticipated event interrupts normal PSMFC processes so that proposals cannot be received at the office designated for receipt of proposals by the exact time specified in the solicitation, and urgent PSMFC requirements preclude

amendment of the solicitation, the time specified for receipt of proposals will be deemed to be extended to the same time of day specified in the solicitation on the first work day on which normal PSMFC processes resume.

- e. Proposals may be withdrawn by written notice received at any time before award. Proposals may be withdrawn in person by an offer or an authorized representative, if the identity of the person requesting withdrawal is established and the person signs a receipt for the proposal before award.
- f. Proposers shall submit proposals in response to this solicitation in English and in U.S. dollars.
- g. Proposers may submit modifications to their proposals at any time before the solicitation closing date and time, and may submit modifications in response to an amendment, or to correct a mistake at any time before award.
- h. Proposers may submit revised proposals only if requested or allowed by PSMFC.
- i. Proposals may be withdrawn at any time before award. Withdrawals are effective upon receipt of notice by the Fiscal Manager.
- j. Each Proposal must state that it is a firm offer which may be accepted within a period of ninety (90) days. Although the contract is expected to be awarded prior to that time, the ninety-day period is requested in order to allow for unforeseeable delays.
- k. Proposer shall submit the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with the authority to bind the firm, as well as to answer questions or provide clarification concerning the firm's proposal.
- l. PSMFC is not liable for any costs incurred by vendors/contractors in developing or submitting their response to this RFP.

Proposal Evaluation

1. All proposals received in accordance with these RFP instructions will be evaluated to determine if they are complete and meet the requirements specified in this RFP.
2. All proposals received in accordance with these RFP instructions will be reviewed, analyzed, evaluated and scored in accordance with the criteria described below. If needed, additional information may be requested from one or more proposers.
3. Request for additional information. During the evaluation period, PSMFC may request additional information in order to fairly evaluate a proposer's offer. If such information is required, the proposer will be notified in writing (or by email) and will be permitted a reasonable period of time to respond.

4. Evaluation Criteria. By use of numerical and narrative scoring techniques, proposals will be evaluated by PSMFC against the factors specified below. The relative weights of the criteria –based on a 100 point scale – are shown in parentheses. The evaluation criteria are:
 - a. Qualifications, experience, references, and ability to address research program priorities (30 points);
 - b. Work Plan/Technical Approach (40 points);
 - c. Cost/Project Budget (30 points)

D. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when financial interests or other opportunities for tangible personal or professional benefit could influence or appear to influence the professional judgment of a member of the Proposal Review Committee. Improper influence could be used to not only advance one's own research program, but also to unfairly promote a family member's, colleague's or former student's program. Thus, care must be exercised to avoid a conflict of interest during the proposal review process and the discussion of past, current or proposed research. A conflict of interest also exists when circumstances simply have the appearance of compromising the profession judgement of a member of the Proposal Review Committee. It is the policy of PSMFC that conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest shall be avoided wherever possible and disclosed and minimized in situations where interests cannot be reasonable separated. Whenever a conflict of interest arises during discussions of the Proposal Review Committee, the member in question shall disclose the possible conflict and excuse themselves from the discussion.

E. Grant Award

1. All qualified proposals will be evaluated and awards will be made to those proposed projects whose combination of cost and technical offers is deemed to best address the research themes of this RFP. Decisions will be disseminated to P.I.s by **June 1, 2019** and research is expected to begin **August 1, 2019**.
2. PSMFC reserves the right to make an award for project at a cost that is less than what was proposed.
3. PSMFC expressly reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and make no award under this RFP if such action is in the best interest of the PSMFC.