

Request for Proposals

Analysis and Recommendations to Improve Time Burden and Cost Estimates for NMFS Alaska Region's Information Collection Requirements



Issue Date: March 6, 2020

Deadline for Submissions: April 3, 2020

Proposed Schedule for the Request for Proposals

March 6, 2020	Request for Proposals (RFP) distributed and posted by PSMFC.
March 20, 2020	Deadline for written questions on the RFP, submitted to PSMFC. Please email written questions to Michael Arredondo, Grants and Contracts Specialist, at marredondo@psmfc.org .
March 24, 2020	Questions and Answers document posted on PSMFC website.
April 3, 2020	Deadline for proposals. Proposals must be received by 5:00 PM Pacific. Please email proposals to marredondo@psmfc.org .
April 17, 2020	Contract awarded to successful bidder.

INTRODUCTION

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) seeks a contractor to prepare an analysis of the time burden and costs associated with NMFS Alaska Region, Sustainable Fisheries Division's (SF Division's or NMFS') information collection requirements and to provide recommendations to NMFS about how to improve these time burden and cost estimates.

The SF Division manages approximately 30 information collections for logbooks, catch and landings reports, scales and weighing, vessel monitoring systems, the Observer Program and electronic monitoring, economic data reports, and each of the catch share programs. These 30 information collections include approximately 200 forms or components, most of which are required by regulation. This information is necessary to manage, conserve, and monitor the federally managed fisheries off Alaska. A list of the SF Division's information collections and links to further information about each collection is in Appendix A to this document.

Under the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), NMFS must submit an updated analysis of time burden and costs to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) every three years to maintain OMB approval to continue to collect this information. Many of the current time and cost estimates are outdated and inconsistent across the Alaska Region's collections. A comprehensive review of the time burden and cost estimates, the process for making these estimates, and the collection of updated information from key individuals and entities required to submit this information is needed to improve and standardize the time burden and cost estimates and provide accurate and complete information to OMB and the public.

SCOPE OF WORK

PSMFC intends to contract with one firm to provide professional services to complete the following four tasks:

- Task 1 – Planning and Status Meetings
- Task 2 – Analytical Approach

- Task 3 – Draft Written Report and Recommendations
- Task 4 – Final Written Report and Recommendations

Task 1 – Planning and Status Meetings

Planning meeting - The contractor must initiate the project with a telephone meeting among the contractor and the NMFS contact (see Contacts section later in this document) within two weeks of the contract being awarded by PSMFC. The goal of the planning meeting is to review the scope of work, deliverables, and expectations to ensure a common understanding of the project and due dates.

Status meetings - Throughout the project life, the contractor must set up and participate in a status meeting by telephone with the NMFS contact at least once a month. At these meetings, the contractor must provide an update on the status of the project including accomplishments since the last meeting and any concerns about meeting project deadlines or deliverables. If mutually agreed upon by the contractor and the NMFS contact, a monthly status report may be completed by e-mail rather than by phone.

The planning and status meetings described above are minimum requirements. Additional meetings and telephone calls may be scheduled at any time by either the contractor or NMFS.

Task 2 - Analytical Approach

The contractor must prepare a written description of the analytical approach that he or she will apply to prepare the report and recommendations to NMFS. In developing the analytical approach, the contractor must review:

1. The SF Division’s current information collection analyses (supporting statements) with particular focus on the type and category of respondents and the time burden and cost estimates for the respondents (See links in Appendix A),
2. OMB and NOAA’s PRA guidance, particularly on methods for estimating time burden and costs and the required cost categories (see References and Appendix B), and
3. The requirements of this Request for Proposals.

The analytical approach may recommend to NMFS that a subset of the information collections, information collection components, or respondent types or categories be prioritized for further review and analysis by the contractor. In making such a recommendation, the contractor must provide an explanation for his or her recommendations.

The contractor must submit the written analytical approach to the NMFS contact. NMFS will provide comments on the analytical approach within 15 calendar days of receipt, unless otherwise agreed upon between the NMFS contact and the contractor.

Task 3 – Draft Written Report and Recommendations

The draft written report and recommendations must be submitted to NMFS for review within 90 days of the date the contract is signed by the contractor.

The draft and final written report and recommendations to NMFS must include the following:

Information about the AKR's Respondent Types or Categories: A written description and table identifying the different categories of respondents that are required to submit information to the SF Division and the information collections and components (individual forms or reports) that contain requirements that apply to each category of respondent. The contractor must recommend the appropriate respondent types or categories based on a classification that is relevant for estimating the costs of complying with the information collection requirements (or the voluntary requests for information, in the case of the cooperative annual reports). Examples of the categories of respondents that submit information to NMFS are vessel owners, vessel operators, permit holders, license holders, managers of processing plants, cooperative managers, etc. The contractor also must identify information collection components that generally require a respondent to hire other people with specific expertise not available within their company or business, such as an attorney, accountant, or auditor.

The information about respondent types or categories will be used by the contractor and NMFS to identify where the same respondent type or category submit information across multiple information collections. This information also will assist NMFS to apply labor costs consistently across all information collection components that are required to be submitted by the same category of respondent.

The contractor may recommend higher priority respondent categories or higher priority information collections to evaluate in more depth in the draft and final written report and recommendations (for example, focus on the respondent category that is required to submit the largest number of individual information collection components). If this is the case, the contractor must provide a written explanation of his or her recommendations about priority in the draft report and recommendations.

Documentation of Current Estimates: The contractor must document the time burden and costs currently included in the SF Division's currently approved information collection supporting statements. The contractor must use the cost categories required by OMB to be included in information collection supporting statements (see PRA guidance). The contractor may provide this information in a spreadsheet that has already been started by NMFS (available as supporting material for this RFP), or develop a new spreadsheet or format for this information. If the contractor uses the spreadsheet prepared by NMFS, the contractor must confirm that the cost estimates contained in NMFS's spreadsheet are consistent with the cost estimates used in the current information collection supporting statements.

The contractor also must provide an analysis of the degree of consistency in current cost estimates for the same respondent type or category across multiple information collection components. This analysis must identify where NMFS may currently be using different cost estimates for the same activity by the same respondent category across multiple information collection components.

Recommendations to Improve Cost Estimates

The contractor must make written recommendations about how to improve, update, and standardize the estimates of time burden and costs in the SF Division's information collections. The contractor also must provide updated time burden and cost estimates for the highest priority categories of respondents or information collection components, as determined by the contractor's analytical approach and agreed to by NMFS. In developing these recommendations, the contractor may seek input from a limited number of respondents within the limitations of information that may be collected from the public without requiring approval by OMB under the Paperwork Reduction Act. In seeking this input, the contractor must not trigger the requirement for prior approval from OMB under regulations implementing the PRA.¹ OMB's

¹ Under the PRA, any set of questions or recordkeeping requirements imposed on ten or more members of the public (individuals or entities), including questions which are used by Federal agencies to collect information for statistical

[guidance for implementing the PRA](#) appears to allow the collection of information through a public meeting or workshop without requiring OMB approval, if the contractor proposes and NMFS agrees to this approach.

The contractor must provide recommendations about the components of labor costs that should be included in the labor cost estimates (i.e., wages, benefits, other overhead).

The contractor must provide comments and recommendations about the use of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates for Alaska (see Appendix B) versus establishing a process for determining labor costs through other means. The use of BLS information currently is required by NOAA and OMB if NMFS does not have better estimates of labor costs.

The contractor must provide recommendations about how to estimate costs of submitting information for components that are included in package or bundle. For example, costs for telephone, computers, faxing, or electronic submissions may be included in package or bundle of services, and not generate an additional cost per unit for each submission. Other costs like photocopying, mailing, or delivering documents likely would always incur some per unit cost associated with the submission.

The contractor must recommend generally when and how should NMFS should update cost estimates in the future.

The contractor must recommend a worksheet or set of questions that NMFS could use in the future to solicit input from respondents about time burden and cost estimates. This worksheet or set of questions could then be used by NMFS during the public comment period on information collection renewals (every three years) and on changes to information collection requirements that may be made through a proposed rule. The recommended worksheet or set of questions must generally address the specific categories of comments solicited by OMB², but also must request information about the time burden and cost estimates that NMFS is required to include in the supporting statements in an easily understandable format using plain language and terms familiar to the Alaska fishery participants.

The contractor also may include in the draft and final written report and recommendations the results of the contractor's review of selected information collection supporting statements for similar information collections in other NMFS regions, and advice on methods or approaches being used by other regions that may inform the Alaska Region's process or approach.

Task 3 – Final Written Report and Recommendations

NMFS will review the draft report and provide written comments, questions, and suggestions within 30 days of receipt of the draft.

purposes must be approved in advance by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). See the definition of "information collection" at [5 CFR 1320.5](#).

² Notices in the *Federal Register* requesting comments on NMFS information collection requirements specifically request comments on "(a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology."

The final written report and recommendations must address all of the requirements for the draft report and recommendations and address all comments NMFS made on the draft report and recommendations. The contractor must submit a completed final written report and recommendations to NMFS within 30 days of receiving NMFS written comments on the draft report.

SUMMARY OF MILESTONES AND DEADLINES

The following represents a general schedule of milestones and deadlines. The milestones and deadlines may be changed by mutual agreement between PSMFC, NMFS, and the contractor.

Day	Milestone
1	Date the contract is signed by the contractor.
15	Task 1: Initiate project planning meeting with NMFS and Council staff within 15 days of the date the contract is signed by the contractor.
Monthly	Task 1: Status meetings or emails monthly.
30	Task 2: Contractor submits the written analytical approach within 30 days of the date the contract is signed by the contractor.
45	NMFS will review and provide comments to the contractor on the analytical approach within 15 days of receipt of the analytical approach.
90	Task 3: Contractor submits draft written report and recommendations to NMFS for review within 90 days of the date the contract is signed by the contractor.
120	NMFS provides comments to the contractor on the draft written report and recommendations.
150	Task 4: Contractor submits final written report and recommendations to NMFS within 30 days of receiving NMFS comments on the draft report and recommendations.

The contractor may submit or complete any of the deliverables before the due dates specified above.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Document Format

All written documents must be submitted electronically to the NMFS contact as either Microsoft Word or Excel documents, unless otherwise specified and agreed to by NMFS.

Contractor Responsibility for Property, Data, and Documents

The contractor shall protect from unauthorized disclosure or use of any equipment, materials or information made available by the Government, or that the contractor may have access to by virtue of the provisions of this contract, that are not intended for public disclosure. The contractor will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

All data and information provided by the Government, or developed by the contractor, in performing this contract there under, remain the exclusive property of the Government. Within 10 days after completion or termination of this contract, the contractor shall turn over to the Government all materials (copies included) that were furnished to the contractor by the Government and all materials that were developed by the contractor in performing the contract.

The contractor may be provided access to the confidential and sensitive information and other data, if such access is necessary to develop the deliverables. All contractor personnel requiring access to DOC NOAA NMFS Alaska Region information systems, networks, shall only have access to that information required for their tasks. Contractors must therefore request and enforce only those facility and information system accesses that are essential for each individual's job performance.

The contractor will:

- be responsible for the information system security of all systems used by the contractor, and connected to DOC NOAA NMFS Alaska Region networks, or operated by the contractor for DOC NOAA NMFS Alaska Region, regardless of location.
- not use or redistribute any DOC NOAA NMFS Alaska Region information processed, stored, or transmitted by the contractor except as specified in the contract.

Travel

No travel is required for this project. However, the applicant may propose travel as a component of the project proposal and provide a justification for this proposed travel.

CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS

The qualified contractor must have knowledge of the:

- Fishery conservation and management programs managed by NMFS in the Federal fisheries off Alaska, and the participants in these fisheries;
- Factors or conditions which affect operating costs for participants in these fisheries; and
- The requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act for information collection supporting statements;

The contractor must demonstrate successful experience preparing economic analyses to support fishery conservation and management actions in the Federally managed fisheries off Alaska or successful experience preparing PRA supporting statements for Federally managed fisheries in the United States. The contractor also must demonstrate successful experience developing analyses that meet NMFS's requirements, and the ability to produce analytical documents on deadline.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS AND SCORING

Please provide a resume for each person proposed to work on this project and an explanation of the roles and responsibilities anticipated for each person listed. Please also provide all of the information required in Appendix C about each person proposed to work on this project, using the format shown in the appendix. In the proposal, include the number of hours and the hourly rate charged for each person proposed to work on the project; an estimate of the travel and per diem costs for any people proposed to travel as part of the applicant's proposal; and information about any other anticipated costs associated with completing the project.

All proposals will be evaluated and scored using the following criteria:

1. Experience (45%): Proposers must demonstrate past performance and experience preparing economic analysis for proposed fishery conservation or management actions for the Federally managed fisheries off Alaska, or successful experience preparing PRA supporting statements for Federally managed fisheries in the United States. In addition, proposers must demonstrate how they meet all other experience

requirements listed in the Contractor Qualifications section above. For each person identified as a proposed contributor to the project, provide a list of the projects that each person has successfully completed in the past that demonstrate experience. Describe how that person's contribution to the listed project meets these experience requirements. Please include references from these projects.

2. Analytical Approach (40%): Proposers will be scored on the basis of their overall and specific technical and analytical approach to the described tasks, along with their understanding of the specific issues and risks relating to each of the separate tasks.

Proposers must explain in writing their analytical approach to:

- Successfully and independently plan and carry out the required deliverables for this project;
- Successfully apply expert knowledge of the laws, regulations, and policies governing the preparation of economic analyses of the Federally managed fisheries off Alaska;
- Effectively communicate with NMFS and industry participants to plan and conduct the project to meet all project requirements and deadlines, and to respond to NMFS's comments and recommendations about the draft written report and recommendations; and
- Produce draft and final reports and recommendations that meet NMFS's requirements by specified deadlines.

Cost (15%): Proposers will be scored on the basis of the cost estimates provided in their proposal.

Basis for Remuneration

This grant will be administered on a time and materials basis with the contractor submitting bills periodically for work completed as directed in the grant statement of work and remuneration to contractor on approval by PSMFC.

REFERENCES

Additional information about the Paperwork Reduction Act and related agency guidance is available at the following:

Federal regulations governing information collections (5 CFR part [1320](#)). In §1320.5, see the definitions of "burden" and "collection of information."

The Department of Commerce's PRA Information Collection Requests Handbook, August 2016. This handbook is not available online.

[The Office of Personnel Management's PRA Guide](#) (April 2011) also may have some relevant and helpful background information.

Instructions, Conditions and Notices to Proposers

1. Questions regarding this RFP shall be submitted in writing no later than **March 20, 2020** to:

Michael Arredondo
Email: marredondo@psmfc.org

The answers to the written questions will be posted on PSMFC's website by **March 24, 2020**

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 proposals is **April 3, 2020**. Proposals shall be submitted electronically to:

Attn: Michael Arredondo
Email: marredondo@psmfc.org

- 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 minimum requirements specified in this RFP.
2. All proposals received that meet the minimum requirements will be reviewed, analyzed, evaluated and scored in accordance with the criteria described in the section entitled, "Proposal Requirements and Scoring". 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 indicated in the section entitled "Proposal Requirements and Scoring". The relative weights of the criteria –based on a 100 point scale – are shown in parentheses.

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 professional judgment 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 reasonably 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 the award will be made to the proposed project whose combination of cost and technical offers is deemed to best address the work specified in this RFP.
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.

Appendix A
NMFS Alaska Region's Information Collections

All collection numbers are prefaced with 0648-.

OMB Number	Information Collection Name
0206	Alaska Region Permit Family of Forms (FFP, FPP, EFP)
0213	Alaska Region Logbook and Activity Family of Forms
0269	Western Alaska Community Development Quota Program
0272	Individual Fishing Quotas for Pacific Halibut and Sablefish in the Alaska Fisheries
0316	Prohibited Species Donation Program
0318	Alaska Observer Program
0330	NMFS Alaska Region Scale and Catch Weighing Requirements
0334	Alaska License Limitation Program for Groundfish, Crab, and Scallops
0353	Alaska Region Gear Identification Requirements
0393	American Fisheries Act: Permits
0401	Alaska American Fisheries Act Reports
0428	Commercial Operator's Annual Report (COAR)
0445	Alaska Region Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Program
0512	Alaska Pacific Halibut Fisheries: Subsistence
0513	Aleutian Islands Pollock Fishery Requirements
0514	Alaska Region Crab Permits
0515	Alaska Interagency Electronic Reporting System (IERS)
0516	Alaska Crab Arbitration
0518	Alaska Region Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Crab Economic Data Reports (EDRs)
0545	Alaska Rockfish Program: Permits and Reports
0564	Groundfish Trawl Catcher Processor Economic Data Report (EDR)
0565	Alaska Region Amendment 80 Permits and Reports
0575	Alaska Pacific Halibut Fisheries: Charter Recordkeeping
0592	Alaska Pacific Halibut Fisheries: Charter Permits
0633	Alaska Chinook Salmon Economic Data Report (EDR)
0665	Alaska Community Quota Entity (CQE) Program
0678	Alaska Council Cooperative Annual Reports
0700	Gulf of Alaska Catcher Vessel & Processor Trawl (CVPT) Economic Data Report (EDR)
0711	Alaska Quota Cost Recovery Programs
0743	Alaska Notification of Intent to Process Aleutian Islands Pacific Cod

See notes on following page.

Notes to Appendix A: Links are provided to more information about each collection on reginfo.gov. Information about time burden and cost estimates for each component of each collection may be found in the “supporting statement.” Look for the most recently submitted supporting statement. General searches for historical information on each collection can be made through the “Information Collection Review” tab, search function on reginfo.gov.

Appendix B
OMB’s Instructions for Identifying National Wage Information by Occupation

From https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm

Click on **OES DATA** on the left hand side of the page until the pop-out displays

Select **All OES Data**

Under **OES Data, May 2018**

Select **Research estimates by state and industry**

OES Research Estimates by State and Industry

Scroll down to “**How to Obtain OES Research Estimates**” May 2018

For example, to find information about average wage information for some fisheries related occupations.

Find **Sectors 11 & 81: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting and Other Services (except Federal, State, and Local Government)**

Click on that link to open the spreadsheet.

Find the desired **state** in column B.

Find the appropriate **NAICS** in Column C. Use 11 for Fishing.

Staying in the correct **state**, find the appropriate **Occ Code** in Column E. Use 45-0000 for Fishing.

The **Occ Title** will be Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations.

Scroll over to the column with the heading **h_mean**. This stands for Mean Hourly Wage.

Popular Professions and their Occupational Groups		
Fisherpersons/Anglers		
Vessel Operator	Captains, Mates, & Pilots of Water Vessels	53-5021
Ship Captain	Captains, Mates, & Pilots of Water Vessels	53-5021
First Receiver/Processor	Buyers & purchasing Agents	13-1020
Observer	Agricultural Inspectors	45-2011
Observer Providers	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	11-9013
	Compliance Officer	13-1041

Appendix C. Budget Template

Person 1:

Name:

Title/Role:

Hourly rate:

Residence (City, State):

Person 2:

Name:

Title/Role:

Hourly rate:

Residence (City, State):

Person 3:

Name:

Title/Role:

Hourly rate:

Residence (City, State):

Repeat as necessary.

Please provide an estimate of the travel and per diem costs for any travel proposed for this project, and information about any other anticipated costs associated with completing the project.