

## **Request for Proposals**

### **Workshop Facilitation to Address Invasive Forms of Research on Cook Inlet Beluga Whales**



**ISSUE DATE:**

**May 8, 2017**

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:**

**May 31, 2017**

**SECTION 1: PROPOSED REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) SCHEDULE**  
**Workshop Addressing Invasive Forms of Research on Cook Inlet Beluga Whales**

08 May 2017            Requests for Proposals (RFP) distributed and posted at:  
<http://www.psmfc.org/procurements/blog>

19 May 2017            Deadline for written questions on RFP  
Written questions should be directed to:  
Michael Arredondo  
205 SE Spokane Street, Suite 100  
Portland, OR 97202  
Email: [marredondo@psmfc.org](mailto:marredondo@psmfc.org)

24 May 2017            Answers to written questions posted on PSMFC website:  
<http://www.psmfc.org/procurements/blog>

31 May 2017            Deadline for proposals  
One (1) electronic copy to:  
Michael Arredondo  
205 SE Spokane Street, Suite 100  
Portland, OR 97202  
Email: [marredondo@psmfc.org](mailto:marredondo@psmfc.org)

## **SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION / SPECIFICATIONS / WORK STATEMENT**

### **2.1 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is for the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) to procure the professional services of a contractor that will coordinate with the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Alaska Region (AKR) Protected Resources Division (PRD) staff to plan and facilitate a workshop to address invasive forms of research on endangered Cook Inlet beluga whales (CIB).

Understanding the characteristics of this beluga population is crucial for effective management. Conducting research that uses invasive methods is one way to collect population data. Recently, NMFS identified the need for continuing population monitoring in both the Species in the Spotlight Action Plan for CIB<sup>1</sup>, and in the Recovery Plan for CIB<sup>2</sup>. The Recovery Plan specifically recommends the following recovery action: "Hold a workshop to consider the feasibility, risks, and benefits of different sampling techniques such as breath capture, remote ultrasound, and live captures to obtain samples and measures for further analysis." While this recovery action serves as a useful guide in crafting an agenda for this workshop, it is important to note that with technological and methodological advances, other forms of invasive research not alluded to above may be worthy of consideration during the workshop.

In order to implement this recovery action, NMFS AKR PRD requires a trained and experienced facilitator/team to assist with planning and conducting a 2-day workshop to be held at an appropriate conference location in Anchorage, Alaska during fall 2017.

PSMFC has funds available for logistical support to organize such an event, to include:

1. Salary for an event organizer/facilitator;
2. Workshop venue and equipment rentals;
3. Travel-related expenses for confirmed, non-Federal participants who are outside of the Anchorage commuting area (between Wasilla/Palmer and Girdwood); and
4. Development and distribution of a professional workshop report.

### **2.2 SCOPE OF WORK**

The scope of the work to be covered under this contract includes:

1. Providing professional meeting facilitation expertise and support to NMFS AKR PRD staff prior to and during the workshop;
2. Providing guidance/suggestions on appropriate workshop settings and approaches based on the goals articulated by NMFS AKR PRD;

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<sup>1</sup> The Species in the Spotlight Action Plan for Cook Inlet Beluga Whales is available at [http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/stories/2016/02/docs/cook\\_inlet\\_beluga\\_whale\\_spotlight\\_species\\_5\\_year\\_action\\_plan\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/stories/2016/02/docs/cook_inlet_beluga_whale_spotlight_species_5_year_action_plan_final_web.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The Recovery Plan for Cook Inlet Beluga Whales is available at [https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/cib\\_recovery\\_plan\\_final.pdf](https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/cib_recovery_plan_final.pdf)

3. Assist PSMFC staff with logistical support for hosting the workshop (e.g., travel arrangements for non-Federal participants; venue and equipment rentals); and
4. Providing a post-workshop report within 45 days after the workshop.

The workshop is estimated to be 2 days in length, between October and December 2017 (exact dates TBD based upon workshop participants availability). The workshop will require the contractor to be physically present. The workshop will be attended by those who conduct research on CIB, those who have expertise in implementing invasive research techniques that may be contemplated for use on CIBs, and those who use research findings to help promote the recovery of CIB, including NMFS staff. It is estimated there will be approximately 25 participants, several of which will be Federal employees that cannot have travel expenses paid via this contract. Non-Federal participants may be from across the U.S. and Canada.

At this workshop, participants will be asked to:

1. Identify invasive forms of research/sampling that may be considered for use on CIB, with consideration given to the contents of the CIB recovery plan.
2. Undertake a risk:conservation benefit analysis for each form of invasive research method, detailing any risks to both individual belugas and the population.
6. Prioritize the identified invasive research studies according to their risk:benefit ratios, with consideration also given to cost, feasibility, and ability to obtain similar information via a less invasive technique.

The following tasks identify requirements in the support of the workshop:

Task 1: Pre-meeting services. The facilitator will be required to review the Recovery Plan for the CIB and the Species in the Spotlight Action Plan for CIB shortly after award of contract to ensure comprehension of the meeting topic and effective project support. The facilitator is expected to work with PSMFC and NMFS AKR PRD staff in advance of the workshop to plan the workshop, including identifying and resolving any questions about potential participants list, developing and ensuring the agenda will meet the stated needs of NMFS, and determining if any pre-meeting materials need to be developed or distributed.

Task 2: In-meeting services. During the meeting, the facilitator shall lead the meeting ensuring the agenda goals are met, and the discussions remain orderly, on-topic, and are properly documented. The facilitator is responsible for obtaining all appropriate in-meeting supplies and equipment.

Task 3: Post-meeting services. Following the workshop, the facilitator will develop a workshop report that documents the discussions and recommendations put forth by the participants, and as described in section 2.3 Deliverables.

## **2.3 DELIVERABLES**

The post-workshop deliverable shall be a report containing:

1. A list of participants with their affiliations and contact information,
2. The workshop final agenda,
3. A synopsis of meeting discussions,
4. A narrative of action items requiring post-meeting follow-up, noting the party responsible for that follow-up, and
5. Documentation of the full range of views expressed by workshop participants on matters of invasive research technique benefits, risks, risk: benefit ratio, identification of invasive research/sampling appropriate for implementation on CIB, and prioritization of the vetted research/sampling topics or techniques. The proportion of workshop participants expressing or espousing each particular point of view will be noted.

The report is due 45 days after the completion of the workshop.

## **2.4 TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Experience facilitating workshops when the work to be done is complex, the people and ideas involved are diverse and the time to get it done is rushed.
- Specialization in the use of both structured and unstructured meeting implementation.
- Ability to document in one comprehensive report all of the most important ideas, discussion, data, recommendations, conclusions, questions for further study, and plans for immediate action.

## **2.5 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

The successful implementation of this contract is completely dependent on hiring a qualified person. Minimum qualifications for this contractor include:

- Demonstrated familiarity with NOAA and NMFS mission and goals.
- Experience facilitating technical scientific meetings.
- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of marine mammal research issues and concerns.
- Experience with issues related to ESA-listed species and the MMPA.
- Expertise dealing with difficult people and diverse opinions and demonstrated success in achieving positive outcomes and stated objectives.

## **2.6 ESTIMATED BUDGET**

It is estimated that there will be \$45,000 available to fund all aspects of the workshop to include, but not limited to, facilitation, logistical support and venue rental.

## **SECTION 3: INSTRUCTIONS, CONDITIONS, AND NOTICES TO PROPOSERS**

### **3.1 QUESTIONS**

Questions regarding this RFP shall be submitted in writing no later than May 19, 2017 to:

Michael Arredondo  
205 SE Spokane Street, Suite 100  
Portland, OR 97202  
Email: [marredondo@psmfc.org](mailto:marredondo@psmfc.org)  
Phone: (503) 595 – 3100  
Fax: (503) 595 – 3444

### **3.2 AMENDMENTS TO SOLICITATIONS**

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.

### **3.3 SPECIAL CONDITIONS**

None.

### **3.4 SUBMISSION, MODIFICATION REVISION, AND WITHDRAWAL OF PROPOSALS**

3.4.1 Deadline for proposals is May 31, 2017

3.4.2 Proposals by electronic copy must be submitted

to: Attn: Michael Arredondo  
205 SE Spokane Street, Suite 100  
Portland, OR 97202  
Email: [marredondo@psmfc.org](mailto:marredondo@psmfc.org)  
Phone: (503) 595 – 3100  
Fax: (503) 595 – 3444

3.4.3 Proposals and modifications to proposals may be submitted via electronic copy in PDF or MS Word format.

3.4.4 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.

3.4.5 Proposers are responsible for submitting proposals, and any modification of revisions, so as to reach PSMFC by 4:00 p.m., local time, on May 31, 2017

3.4.6 Late proposals

3.4.6.1 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

3.4.6.2 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

3.4.6.3 It is the only proposal received.

3.4.6.4 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.

3.4.6.5 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.

3.4.6.6 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.

3.4.6.7 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.

3.4.7 Proposers shall submit proposals in response to this solicitation in English and in U.S. dollars.

3.4.8 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.

3.4.9 Proposers may submit revised proposals only if requested or allowed by PSMFC.

3.4.10 Proposals may be withdrawn at any time before award. Withdrawals are effective upon receipt of notice by the Fiscal Manager.

3.4.11 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.

3.4.12 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.

3.4.13 PSMFC is not liable for any costs incurred by vendors/contractors in developing or submitting their response to this RFP.

### 3.5 PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT

3.5.1 General Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the vendor's ability to meet the requirements of the work outlined in this RFP.

Proposals may be submitted as an electronic file attached to an email message and sent to [marredondo@psmfc.org](mailto:marredondo@psmfc.org) with the following inserted in the "subject" line of the email: **"Workshop Facilitation to Address Invasive Forms of Research on Cook Inlet Beluga Whales RFP"**. Emailed proposals must be received by the specified deadline according to the internal clock of PSMFC's server.

Proposers should use the following outline in organizing the content of their proposals:

#### 3.5.2 Cover Letter

The letter of transmittal shall, at a minimum, contain the following:

- Identification of the Proposer, including business name, address, and telephone number;
- Name, title, address, telephone number, fax number, and email address of a contact person during the period of proposal evaluation;
- A statement that the proposal shall remain valid for a period not fewer than ninety (90) days from the due date of proposals;
- Identification of any information contained in the proposal that the Proposer deems to be, and establishes as, confidential or proprietary and wishes to be withheld from disclosure to others under the US Freedom of Information Act. A blanket statement that all contents of the proposal are confidential or proprietary will not be honored by PSMFC); and
- The signature and typed name of the person authorized to bind the offering firm to the terms of the proposal

#### 3.5.3 Table of Contents

Insert a complete table of contents for material included in the proposal, including page numbers.

#### 3.5.4 Qualifications, Related Experience and References

3.5.4.1 Overview: This section should establish the ability of the Proposer to satisfactorily perform the work described in the Scope of Work and Deliverables (Section 2.2 and 2.3 of this RFP) by reasons of: demonstrated competence in the services to be provided; the nature and relevance of similar work currently being performed or recently completed; record of meeting schedules and deadlines of other clients; competitive advantages over other firms in the same industry; strength and stability as a business concern; and supportive client references. Information should be furnished for both the Proposer and any subcontractors included in the offer.

3.5.4.2 Furnish background information about your firm, including date of founding, legal form (i.e. sole proprietorship, LLC, corporation/state of incorporation), number and location of offices, principle lines of business, number of employees, day/hours of operation and other pertinent data. Disclose any conditions (e.g. bankruptcy or other financial problems, pending litigation, planned office closures, impending mergers) that may affect the Proposer's ability to perform in accordance with a resulting contract. Certify that the firm is not debarred, suspended or otherwise declared ineligible to contract by any federal, state, or local public agency.

3.5.4.3 Describe your firm's most noteworthy qualifications for providing the required services to PSMFC, including years of experience providing like services. Specifically highlight those qualifications that distinguish you from others.

3.5.4.4 List any other public agencies to which your firm has provided workshop facilitation services.

3.5.4.5 Identify at least three (3) former clients that PSMFC may contact as references and who can independently evaluate the Proposer's expertise in this area. Describe the work performed for the client and include the name, job title, address, and phone number of a contact person for each reference.

3.5.4.6 Describe other lines of business in which your firm is engaged.

3.5.4.7 If your organization is a subsidiary or division of a parent firm, provide similar background information on the parent company and identify any other affiliated companies.

3.5.4.8 Disclose any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the scope of work required by PSMFC and your firm's other business activity.

### 3.5.5 Work Plan / Technical Approach

3.5.5.1 This section should demonstrate the Proposer's understanding of PSMFC's objectives and requirements, demonstrate the proposer's ability to meet those requirements and outline clearly and concisely the plan for accomplishing the specified work.

3.5.5.2 Describe succinctly how your firm would accomplish the work and satisfy PSMFC's objectives as described in this RFP.

### 3.5.6 Cost

3.5.6.1 This section should disclose all charges that will be assessed to PSMFC as a result of the services provided by Proposer.

3.5.6.2 Quote an estimated total fee and total hourly fees for completing all requirements outlined in the Scope of Work.

3.5.6.3 Quote rates for additional, optional consulting hours that may be required for special projects/consulting work.

3.5.6.4 State your preference for how payments should be made (e.g. monthly, quarterly, semi-annually).

3.5.6.5 For all fees listed above, provide quotes for the initial term. The total fees shall include all expenses and costs, including direct labor, supplies, travel, indirect costs and profit.

### 3.5.7 Exceptions / Deviations

State any exceptions or deviations from the requirements stated in this RFP. If your firm wishes to present alternative approaches to meet PSMFC's work requirements, these should be thoroughly explained.

### 3.5.8 Appendices

3.5.8.1 Furnish as appendices supporting documents requested in the preceding instructions.

3.5.8.2 Include any additional information you deem essential to proper evaluation of your proposal and which is not solicited in any of the preceding sections.

## 3.6 PROPOSAL EVALUATION

3.6.1 General. 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. An award will be made to the Proposer whose offer is judged to be the most advantageous to PSMFC.

PSMFC expressly reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and make no award under this RFP or to negotiate separately with competing vendors.

3.6.2 Process. 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. Interviews will be conducted with the top scoring Proposers. Following the initial interview, review will be conducted by PSMFC Staff. Selections will then be made for a second round of interviews.

3.6.3 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.

3.6.4 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. Within each evaluation criterion listed, the sub-criteria are those described in Section 3.5, “Proposal Format and Content”. The evaluation criteria are:

3.6.4.1 Qualifications, experience, references, and ability to carry out the Scope of Work (40 points);

3.6.4.2 Work Plan/Technical Approach (30 points);

3.6.4.3 Cost (30 points)

### **3.7 CONTRACT AWARD**

3.7.1 All qualified proposals will be evaluated and an award will be made to the firm whose combination of cost and technical offers is deemed to be in the best interest of PSMFC.

3.7.2 The PSMFC may reject any or all of the proposals if such action is in the PSMFC’s interest.

3.7.3 The PSMFC may waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals received.

3.7.4 The PSMFC reserves the right to make an award on any item for a quantity less than a quantity offered, at the unit cost or price offered, unless the offer specifies otherwise in the proposal.

3.7.5 The PSMFC reserves the right to make multiple awards if, after considering the additional administrative cost, it is in the PSMFC’s best interest to do so.

3.7.6 Exchanges with proposers after receipt of a proposal do not constitute a rejection or counteroffer by the PSMFC.

3.7.7 The PSMFC may determine that a proposal is unacceptable if the prices proposed are materially unbalanced between line items or subline items. Unbalanced prices exists when, despite an acceptable total evaluated price, the price of one or more contract line items is significantly overstated or understated as indicated by the application of cost or price analysis techniques. A proposal may be rejected if the PSMFC Fiscal Manager determines that the lack of balances poses an unacceptable risk to the PSMFC.

3.7.8 If a cost realism analysis is performed, cost realism may be considered by the source selection authority in evaluating performance or schedule risk.

3.7.9 The PSMFC may disclose the following information in post award debriefings to other proposers:

3.7.9.1 The overall evaluated cost of price and technical rating of the successful proposer;

3.7.9.2 The overall ranking of all proposers, when any ranking was developed by

the agency during source selection; and

3.7.9.3 A summary of the rationale for award.

### **3.8 SPECIAL CONTRACT AWARD REQUIREMENTS**

#### **3.8.1 Conflict of Interest**

The Proposer warrants that, to the best of the Proposer's knowledge and belief, there are no relevant facts or circumstances which could give rise to an organizational conflict of interest, as defined in the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Subpart 9.5, or that the Proposer has disclosed all such relevant information.

The Proposer further agrees that if an actual or potential organizational conflict of interest is discovered after award, the Proposer will make full disclosure in writing to the PSMFC Fiscal Manager. This disclosure shall include a description of actions that the Proposer has taken or proposes to take, after consultation with the PSMFC Fiscal Manager, to avoid, mitigate, or neutralize the actual or potential conflict.

Remedies – The PSMFC Fiscal Manager may terminate the contract for convenience, in whole or in part, if it deems such termination necessary to avoid an organizational conflict of interest. If the Proposer was aware of a potential organizational conflict of interest prior to award or discovered an actual or potential conflict after award and did not disclose or misrepresented relevant information to the PSMFC Fiscal Manager, PSMFC may terminate the contract for default, debar the Proposer from PSMFC contracting, or pursue such other remedies as may be permitted by law.

The Proposer further agrees to insert provisions that shall conform substantially to the language of this clause, including this paragraph, in any subcontract, personnel agreement, or consultant agreement hereunder.

#### **3.8.2 Indemnification**

Contractor shall indemnify and hold harmless PSMFC and its officers, agents, employees, boards and commissions, against any and all loss, damages, liability, claims, suits, costs and expense whatsoever, including reasonable attorneys' fees, regardless of the merits or outcome of any such claim or suit arising from or in any manner connected to Proposer's negligent performance of services provided or work conducted as a result of this RFP.