

Request for Proposals:
Marine Aquaculture Pilot Projects



Issue Date: July 2, 2021

Deadline for Submissions: August 20, 2021

Proposal Schedule

- July 2, 2021: Request for Proposal (RFP) issued and distributed
- July 23, 2021: Deadline for written questions regarding this RFP
Please email questions to Michael Arredondo at: marredondo@psmfc.org
- July 30, 2021: Q&A document, including the answers to the written questions posted on the PSMFC website at: <http://www.psmfc.org/procurements>
- August 20, 2021: Deadline for submission of proposals
Proposals must be submitted by e-mail to: marredondo@psmfc.org
Subject line for submissions: Marine Aquaculture Pilot Projects
Faxed and hard copy proposals will not be accepted.
- August 23 - September 03, 2021: Proposal review
- September 10, 2021: Project finalist selected
- October, 2021 - April 30, 2023: Anticipated Project Period

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 **\$640,000** in grants to fund marine aquaculture pilot projects focusing on sustainable aquatic farming techniques and regional business practices to grow U.S. domestic seafood.

Background

Over 85% of seafood consumed in the United States is imported and, of that amount, it has been estimated that more than half is from overseas aquaculture. The United States ranks only seventeenth in the world in aquaculture production despite possessing the largest exclusive economic zone in the world.

To address the major lost opportunity for job creation in coastal communities and to encourage the development of a domestic seafood supply, the three interstate marine fisheries commissions, with funding from NOAA fisheries, is seeking proposals to conduct regional pilot programs for partnerships between the seafood industry and community partners. The goal of these pilot programs will be to develop, validate and deploy economically and environmentally sustainable aquatic farming techniques and regional business practices to grow U.S. domestic seafood production. To maximize the impact of these pilot grants, we are giving priority consideration to promising but less commercially developed technologies, such as those targeting shellfish, seaweed, and other relative newcomers to the domestic aquaculture industry.

Scope of Work

The geographic scope of the proposed projects is for the U.S. West Coast states of Alaska, California, Oregon and Washington, as well as Hawaii and U. S. Pacific Territories. The primary location of the proposed projects must be in the marine waters/estuarine environment. Proposed projects showing strong industry partnerships, involvement, and/or regional industry prioritization are encouraged. Proposals are particularly encouraged from U.S. Pacific Territories (American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

Some examples of the types of pilot projects to advance the potential development and implementation of developing, validating and deploying economically and environmentally sustainable aquatic farming techniques and regional business practices to grow U. S. domestic seafood production are as follows:

1. Planning work for programmatic permitting development (projects that aid permit decision making rather than acquiring the permits themselves. Some examples of these types of projects may include improved Baseline Environmental Survey methods, development or application of models to evaluate environmental, economic and social risk and trade-offs, techno-economic analysis, tools to evaluate habitat value/interactions of aquaculture, tools to aid in evaluation of protected resources interactions, spatial planning, threat forecasting, remote monitoring)
2. Seaweed, sea cucumber, fish and shellfish (**other than oyster**) farming
3. Farming of species new to aquaculture in the region such as native clams, purple hinge rock scallop, seaweeds, etc.
4. Food safety certification of seafood farmed in federal waters
5. Genetic selection and work for shellfish (**other than oyster**) related to adaptation/mitigation of ocean acidification

The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) will be issuing **\$640,000** in grants to qualified projects. Individual proposals should not exceed **\$125,000** or be less than **\$50,000**. We anticipate funding approximately 5-7 projects.

Eligible Applicants

Researchers at U.S. and Territorial (American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) 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.

Application and Submission Information

Content and Form of Application

- A Project Summary of no more than **one page** must be included.
- The Proposal must be no more than **three pages** using at least a 12-point font.

- Tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations are included in the 3-page proposal limit.
- Appendices (additional pages to the 3-page proposal limit and 1-page summary) may include budgets and justifications, any project related permits and/or access agreements, previous, current and pending support, and information such as resumes.
- Letters of support or intent are encouraged.
- Brevity will assist reviewers and program staff in dealing effectively with proposals.

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

a. Project Summary (1-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
 - Current and pending support (if applicable)
 - 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 (3-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. **Permitting:** The proposal must describe any Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, or other permit requirements related to the proposed research. The proposal also must describe whether the investigators have the necessary permits in hand, or what steps the investigators have taken to obtain the necessary permits.

c. Project Budget: 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 **July 23, 2021** to:

Michael Arredondo
 PSMFC
 205 SE Spokane Street, Suite 100
 Portland, OR 97202
 Email: marredondo@psmfc.org
 Phone: (503) 595-3100/Fax: (503) 595-3444

- **Note:** For reference, see previous marine aquaculture solicitations, questions and answers. They can be found at [2018 Aquaculture Pilot Projects Q&A](#), [2019 Aquaculture Pilot Projects Q&A](#) and [2020 Marine Aquaculture Pilot Projects Q&A](#)

The answers to the written questions will be posted on PSMFC's website by **July 30, 2021**.

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 **August 20, 2021**:
Michael Arredondo
PSMFC
205 SE Spokane Street, Suite 100
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. Each submitted and complete full proposal is distributed to at least three external reviewers for written evaluation and comments. Historically, reviewers have been from academia, state resource agencies, regional aquaculture center staff, NGO's and PSMFC staff.
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, ability to address program priorities (30 points);
 - b. Work Plan/Technical Approach (30 points);
 - Project structure and design,
 - Specific tasks to be accomplished,
 - Methods that will be used to accomplish the tasks,
 - How products or services will be made available to the seafood industry and communities.
 - c. Partnerships (20 points)
 - How the proposal partners between the seafood industry and community partners and how they will benefit from project results.
 - letters of support,
 - d. Cost/Project Budget (20 points)
 - Detailed budgets and justifications should be attached as an appendix,

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 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 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.

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. It is estimated that the final awards to selected projects will begin in October 2021.
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.
4. PSMFC shall award in the technical rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors:
 - a. Availability of funding.
 - b. Balance/distribution of funds:
 1. Geographically,
 2. By type of institution,
 3. By type of partners,
 4. By research priority,
 5. By project types
 - c. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies.
 - d. Program priorities and policy factors.
 - e. Applicant's prior award performance.
 - f. Partnerships with/participation of targeted groups.
 - g. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA Fisheries to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before funding is approved.