

## **Request for Proposals:**

### **Research to Assess Gulf of Alaska Pacific Cod Stock Conditions in Response to Warm Water and other Variable Ocean Conditions**



**Issue Date: 04/18/2022**

**Deadline for Pre-Proposal Submissions: 05/13/2022**

## Proposal Schedule

April 18, 2022:	Request for Proposal (RFP) issued and distributed
April 29, 2022:	Deadline for written questions regarding this RFP Please email questions to Michael Arredondo at <a href="mailto:marredondo@psmfc.org">marredondo@psmfc.org</a>
May 6, 2022:	Q&A document, including the answer to the written questions posted on the PSMFC website at: <a href="http://www.psmfc.org/procurements">http://www.psmfc.org/procurements</a>
May 13, 2022:	Deadline for submission of pre-proposals Proposals must be submitted by e-mail to: <a href="mailto:marredondo@psmfc.org">marredondo@psmfc.org</a> Subject line for submissions: <b>GOA Pacific Cod Mitigation Research RFP</b> Faxed and hard copy proposals will not be accepted.
May 16-27, 2022:	Pre-Proposal review
June 6, 2022:	Full-proposals requested from selected applicants
June 24, 2022:	Full-proposals due
July 14, 2022:	Proposal applicants notified of recommendations
August 1, 2022 – July 31, 2025:	Anticipated Project Period

## Funding Opportunity Description

### Summary

The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC), in cooperation with the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), will be issuing approximately \$5.9 million in grants to fund projects that investigate ways to improve resiliency in Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Pacific Cod fisheries and mitigate the effects of future warm water events.

Funding is available for up to 3 years and research must be completed by 07/31/2025.

High priority will be given to research topics that provide information to help fishery scientists and managers to assess GOA Pacific Cod stock conditions and develop conservation and management measures for the GOA Pacific Cod fishery in response to warm water and other variable ocean conditions.

Three areas of interest include:

1. Better understanding the effects of warming temperatures on Pacific Cod ecology and population dynamics, with a focus on parameters to improve the stock assessment (e.g. mortality, growth, maturity).

2. Expanded early life history studies (spawning, larval, age-0) to focus on spatial-temporal variation in stock reproductive output, survival processes, and how these vary with changes in climate.
3. Resolving stock spatial structure, migration patterns, and connectivity based on new genetics/genomics approaches. Research may cover a wide range of methods, including understanding early life history, tagging, acoustic telemetry, modelling, genetics, surveys, and maturity.

Specific projects to support these research themes may include:

*Growth and survival of young cod:* Continuation of age-0 juvenile surveys across the Western Gulf of Alaska and Central Gulf of Alaska will generate better estimates of growth and survival for juvenile cod in the stock assessment model. Expanding the temporal scale of Kodiak surveys would help identify the timing of settlement to nearshore habitat, validate a spatial-temporal spawning model and understand overwintering ecology/survival. Larger projects (3-5 years) would include linking observations of spawning - larvae - juvenile surveys to identify climate-driven reproductive output.

*Tagging to determine cod movement:* Pop-up satellite tags in GOA recording temperature and depth (modeled location) combined with bioenergetics models could be used to ascertain movement, growth, and spawn timing. Tagging is also useful for improving age estimation for cod, which is critical for successful stock assessment models.

*Improved stock assessment modeling:* In connection with the pop-up tag study, there is a need to develop a multi-area assessment model for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and GOA. The development of a climate-enhanced GOA model is also needed to test potential reactions to climate change.

*Survey:* Research on seasonal migration of Pacific Cod and impacts of annual variability in migration on the standard survey estimates would improve our understanding of how climate variability and survey timing impact survey estimates. One way to accomplish this would be to increase bottom trawl survey effort outside of the standard summer survey. To understand seasonal migration and interannual variability in Pacific Cod migration would require several, 5 or more, years of survey effort in the spring, but could include a much smaller spatial area limited to the Central and Eastern GOA in waters < 200 m. Besides increasing funding for surveys there would need to be additional survey staff needed to conduct this work as there is currently a shortage of trained personnel for current survey efforts.

*Genetics:* Genetics studies are needed to improve understanding of stock structure, which will improve our ability to realistically model stock size. Genetics studies will also allow us to identify the spawning stock origin of different components of the population, to track movement of cod from winter to summer, and to inform selectivity and stock size relative to summer surveys. All of these insights are critical to inform better understanding of stock structure, which will improve management.

*Maturity:* The stock assessment critically needs better estimates of size and age at maturity and how these parameters are affected by temperature.

The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) will be issuing approximately \$5.9 million in grants to qualified projects.

## **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.

## **Application and Submission Information**

### **PRE-PROPOSAL APPLICATION**

**Pre-proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. PST on May 13, 2022 to [marredondo@psmfc.org](mailto:marredondo@psmfc.org)**

Initial proposals (2-page limit) will allow the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission along with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and a Review Panel to assess research proposals in relation to identified research priorities and available funding. The Review Panel will include representatives from the scientific and commercial fishing communities.

Pre-proposals should include the following information:

- Name of applicant and contact information
- Title of project
- Brief discussion of the focal topic and approach
- Approximate funding to be requested

An individual may submit more than one pre-proposal but only one project may be funded to the lead PI. However, lead PIs may act as co-PIs and partners on other projects being considered.

If selected for further consideration, applicants will be asked to fill out a full proposal.

### **FULL PROPOSALS CONTENT**

The full 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 proposal 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):

- (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 (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:** 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 **April 29, 2022** 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

The subject line of emailed questions must be entitled: “**GOA Pacific Cod Mitigation Research RFP Questions**”.

The answers to the written questions will be posted on PSMFC’s website by **May 6, 2022**

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 **May 13, 2022:**

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

- 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, full proposals will be evaluated 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 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 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. It is expected that the final awards to selected projects will begin on August 1, 2022.
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.