

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Request for Proposals: Marine Aquaculture Pilot Projects



Issue Date: December 1, 2017

Deadline for Submissions: February 1, 2018

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) is requesting proposals to develop regional pilot projects in support of sustainable aquaculture. Specifically, pilot programs should partner with industry to develop techniques and business models to grow domestic seafood production. A priority is to consider promising but less commercially developed technologies for finfish, shellfish, seaweed, and other relative newcomers to the domestic aquaculture industry.

The Commission is making \$450,000 available for the funding period of April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019. Individual proposals should fall within a range from \$50,000 to \$100,000. Any investigator seeking support for this period must submit, as a single file, an electronic proposal by e-mail no later than **5:00 p.m. EST on Thursday, February 1, 2018**. Awards and start dates for successful projects will be announced in the first quarter of 2018. Please see the *Proposal Guidelines* section for proposal and submission instructions.

Background

The NMFS has been requested, by stakeholders, to assist in expanding seafood farming operations and production to offset a \$14 billion seafood trade deficit in the U.S. Aquaculture, done right, benefits communities and the environment.

Aquaculture is currently the third most valuable fishery in New England and many participants are from traditional fishing families. Major U.S. seafood companies now own U.S. fish and shellfish farms and public perception is shifting. As some wild stocks continue to decline and others remain at less than optimal levels, aquaculture efforts have the potential to dovetail within the mission of the Commission to provide healthy and sustainable resources and habitats for the future.

The current NMFS regional aquaculture development partnerships focus on three primary efforts: Efficient Permitting, Technology Development and Research, and Business Acceleration. The focus of this request for proposals (RFP), is to solicit projects related to Business Acceleration. Specifically, proposals should focus on the following key objectives:

- Business Incubators
- Extension
- Regional market and economic impact studies
- Infrastructure
- Workforce development
- Trade facilitation
- Social acceptance
- Financial, loan programs

The intent of the RFP is to initiate the Atlantic component of this national effort and begin more formal discussions on the aquaculture priorities of the Commission.

Proposal

The goals for the requested proposals should address at least one or more of the priorities listed above (not in any order) to advance the potential development of aquaculture efforts in the regions of the ASMFC. Proposals that focus on projects that relate to enhancing the mission of the Commission to rebuild fish stocks and protect essential habitats will be given priority. Examples include reducing fishing pressure on wild stocks and seafood culture with minimal or no impact to fish habitats.

The following are some specific examples of concepts that meet the intent of the RFP:

- Expansions or improvements to aquaculture infrastructure to facilitate growth and development of sustainable aquaculture products.
- Identification and development of Aquaculture Development Zones with pre-planning and pre-permitting for a range of aquaculture activities. May consider local municipalities and outreach efforts to assess public acceptance or objection to aquaculture in local waters.
- Culture of species relatively new to aquaculture such as razor clams, Arctic surf clams, scallops (on a string), marine finfish species, others
- Resolution of issues (e.g., enforcement, water quality, public trust concerns or impacts) related to open water finfish farming in state waters.
- Shellfish (e.g., oyster, mussels) seed production limitation and resolution of interstate transportation of seed
- Social acceptance of aquaculture products and limitations to acceptance by issues such as view shed and pollution concerns. May include the development of information related to public health (e.g., seaweed farming in prohibited waters) and potential habitat concerns.
- Risk assessment of aquaculture gear and identification of best management practices to avoid/mitigate possible endangered species interactions (to help permit agencies expedite permit processing)
- Resolution of SAV (e.g., eelgrass) and ESA issues for particular areas/states by mapping habitat/GIS tools that then opens up areas for aquaculture
- Assess area carrying capacity. Develop method for estimating carrying capacity of the environment for filtering shellfish using the most cost effective parameters, determine those parameters and develop estimates of confidence in results.

Proposal Guidelines

Proposals should clearly outline the project objectives, methodologies, research outputs, qualifications of the investigators who would perform the work, where the work would be performed, and a detailed budget. It is critically important to clearly and explicitly articulate how the proposed work addresses the RFP priorities. For proposals requiring permits or

authorizations, describe the permissions needed to successfully complete the project and feasibility of obtaining permissions within the project timeline. Proposals should also indicate how results of the proposed work will be communicated to interested parties and the public. Proposals should not exceed 2-3 pages in length.

Please follow the instructions for preparing proposals for Commission awards (*Attachment A*). Applicants should be willing to work closely with the Commission staff. Project funds are to be provided by NOAA Fisheries. If a proposal is accepted for funding, the project must comply with all federal government audit principles/procedures and the Department of Commerce's Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.

Duration, Eligibility, and Funding

The Commission will fund proposals on a competitive basis. Researchers at U.S. academic institutions, research laboratories, for-profit companies/firms, nonprofits, and state agencies are all eligible. Proposals from foreign entities are not eligible. Proposals that develop environmentally responsible marine aquaculture to create jobs in coastal communities, produce healthful local seafood, revitalize working waterfronts, and support traditional fishing communities are encouraged. Projects should include, where feasible, participation of the fishing communities, aquaculture communities, and the seafood industry. Projects that provide training for fishermen and others in coastal communities in aquaculture production methods are also encouraged. The majority of the proposed work should be conducted along the U.S. east coast region. Any U.S. federal government agencies, including Regional Fishery Management Councils, are not eligible to receive funding through this solicitation. Proposed activities should be completed in the one-year funding period of April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019.

Submittal Instructions

Investigators should submit an electronic version of the proposal in Word or PDF format via e-mail to Dr. Louis B. Daniel, III (ldaniel@asmfc.org) for receipt no later than **5:00 p.m. EST on Thursday, February 1, 2017**. "ASMFC Aquaculture Research Proposal" must be specified in the subject line. Proposals not received by the deadline will be returned without review. Proposals failing to comply with content and format requirements will not be accepted.

Proposal Evaluation

All proposals meeting the specified requirements will be evaluated through a technical review of independent experts. Proposals will be ranked based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

- *Program Goals and Priorities* – The project contributes to the overall conservation goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success in the U.S. Atlantic coast region.
- *Technical Merit* – The project is technically sound and feasible and there is a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical

experts throughout project planning, design and implementation to ensure activities are technically-sound and feasible.

- *Budget Justification* – Costs are allowable, reasonable, and budgeted in accordance with the Commission’s project-specific cost categories (*Appendix A*) and are in compliance with *OMB Uniform Guidance* as applicable.

Project selection decisions will be disseminated to Principal Investigators by April 1, 2018 and research is expected to immediately following the award.

For More Information

Contact: Dr. Louis B. Daniel, III

Special Projects

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1050 N Highland Street

Suite 200 A-N

Arlington, VA 22201

Email: ldaniel@asmfc.org

Phone: (252) 342-1478

Attachment A

Instructions for Preparing Proposals

Proposal should be an action plan of activities to be accomplished. Please use the following format when preparing your proposal but restrict your proposal to 10 pages in length:

1. **Applicant name:** Identify the name of the applicant organization.
2. **Title:** A short descriptive name of the proposal.
3. **RFP Priority:** Identify the priority or priorities the proposal addresses and how the intended goals of the grant program will be met.
4. **Objective:** State concisely the purpose of the proposal and general methodologies to be used.
5. **Background:** A section that sets the stage for the work and identifies those RFP priorities that the proposal addresses directly;
6. **Rationale:** Explain why the work should be conducted and how it is relevant to developing U.S. Aquaculture.
7. **Location:** Describe the location of work; project maps are encouraged, where applicable.
8. **List of Key Personnel:** List all project personnel and their responsibilities. If personnel are working on the project but are not identified in the project-specific budget, they must be noted as working at no-cost to the project.
9. **Milestone Schedule:** Provide a cross-referencing table summarizing, by job, activities that are to be attained each month, including semi-annual (due in July and January) and final grant reports (due 90 days following project end date).
10. **Project-Specific Budget:** Include a cost estimate breakdown for each cost category covered during the budget period identified. Detailed budget information is required for the following elements.
 - a. **Personnel** - For each employee, provide the time estimated to be charged to the project; the rate/year, month, day, or hour; and the resulting calculated cost assessed to the project.
 - b. **Fringe Benefits** - For each employee, identify all fringe-related costs and the rate applied. If the fringe rate is greater than 25%, a copy of the Fringe Rate Agreement must be included.
 - c. **Travel** - Information must be provided on the purpose of travel, destination, daily cost charges, number of days, and number and identity of travelers. All out-of-state and foreign travel must be justified in the proposal.
 - d. **Equipment** (items having a unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more) - Describe how equipment will be used on the project and why it is needed. Identify make and model numbers and unit cost. In addition, a lease versus purchase analysis is necessary for each piece of equipment. Computers and computer-related hardware are often less than \$5,000; due to long-term operational life-span, the need to purchase these items must be clearly explained.
 - e. **Supplies and Materials** - List general categories of supplies and materials, including unit costs and quantities. The terms "miscellaneous" and "etc." are not allowed.

- f. Contractual/Consulting Services - List each contractor/consultant, describe specific duties to be performed, and how the cost for the service was derived. In addition, a statement as to whether or not the contract or consulting service was competitively selected is necessary. If the service was not competitively selected, a sole source justification is required.
- g. Other Costs - List and describe other costs that are not assignable to the other direct cost categories. Indicate how these costs were derived.
- h. Indirect Costs - If indirect costs are charged, identify the rate used in the calculations, and include **a copy of the current negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with your proposal.**