

Request for Proposals

SEA Maine - Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine

Market Development Subcommittee

Phase 2 Market Development Strategy

Issue Date: October 4, 2021

Closing Date: October 25, 2021

1. SEA Maine Background

The Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine (SEA Maine) is an industry-led initiative committed to growing Maine's seafood economy by developing a roadmap and action plan that will ensure a vibrant, innovative and resilient marine economy. Funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, Maine Technology Institute, and FocusMaine, SEA Maine brings together leaders from aquaculture and commercial fishing to identify strategies and targeted investments to help transition our heritage seafood economy into a modern engine for sustainable economic and job growth.

This cross-sector effort builds on substantial existing research in many areas of the seafood sector, and partners share their research to forge a new vision for the future of Maine's economy. Co-led by Curt Brown, Ready Seafood, and Bill Mook, Mook Sea Farm, the SEA Maine steering committee includes approximately 35 members located across the state including public and private entities including industry, associations, non-profits, academia, and research and development. Maine Development Foundation serves as the project manager for SEA Maine and will coordinate the RFP and selection process.

SEA Maine is a 3-year, \$2.1 million project, initiated in June of 2020, to strategically plan for the future of Maine's seafood economy. The results of our final report and the network we have established are intended to endure far into the future.

2. Project Background

The SEA Maine Market Development Subcommittee is entering Phase 2 of an effort to develop a cohesive market identification and development strategy for the Maine seafood sector. The Phase 2 scope includes the study of the economic value of Maine's seafood sector and the development of a prioritized strategy for marketing Maine's seafood.

An initial Phase 1 effort has been completed and was used to inform this RFP. Phase 1 activities included a comprehensive overview of existing studies on Maine's seafood industry including marketing initiatives and market development studies, as well as a gap analysis to determine missing or needed studies, collateral, or knowledge. The Phase 1 report will be shared internally with the group selected for Phase 2.

3. Project Purpose and Description

Purpose: The objective of Phase 2 is to use the Phase 1 assessment and analysis to develop a strategy for marketing Maine's seafood that includes a prioritized set of recommendations to support long-term competitiveness and growth in Maine's marine living resource sector and economy.

Phase 2 (Scopes A and B) are expected to build off the Phase 1 assessment and analysis. Descriptions of each scope are detailed below.

Scope A

- Develop a cohesive market identification and development strategy for the near-term (5-10 years) and longer term (10-15 years) including existing and new opportunities to grow markets domestically and throughout North America.
- Consider recommendations for the potential establishment of and a 5- to 10-year plan for a Seafood Promotion Council (incorporating Coastal Enterprises Inc (CEI)/Maine Seafood Marketing Initiative (MSMI) recommendations) supported by an appropriate mission and funding. Market development initiatives should be woven into the Council strategy.
- Work collaboratively with the Maine Climate Council's Seafood Business Council concept to maximize alignment/collaboration and minimize duplication.
- Maine Seafood promotional efforts should build off parallel initiatives such as the Maine Climate Council, Department of Marine Resource's (DMR's) marketing efforts, CEI's MSMI, Maine Center for Entrepreneur's (MCE's) Food Accelerator programs, species/subsector-specific marketing entities, among other efforts.
- Identify opportunities for regional (e.g., with other New England states) and national (e.g., a potential National Seafood Council) collaboration to grow markets for Maine seafood.
- Identify infrastructure-related opportunities across the supply chain (such as alignment with working waterfront initiative, cold chain supply, storage and distribution) where they directly relate to market development opportunities.

Scope B

- Commission a study of the economic value of Maine's seafood sector.

Deliverables:

The key deliverable of Phase 2 is a report or reports outlining a prioritized market development strategy for the seafood sector that builds upon the findings of the gap analyses completed in Phase 1. Priorities identified in the report(s) should be supported by data, market analytics, anecdotal information, and new research. The report(s) should include:

Scope A

- Market identification, penetration, and growth strategy for the near-term (5-10 years) and longer term (10-15 years), including consideration of the establishment of a Seafood Promotion Council supported by an appropriate mission and funding.
- Prioritized recommendations to grow markets and margin at various points in the supply chain from catch/harvest through processing, distribution, and end user/retail.
- Identification of relevant models and recommendations for alignment with other parallel initiatives such as a Maine Seafood Promotional Council, Maine Climate Council, Maine International Trade Commission, DMR's marketing efforts, CEI's MSMI, MCE Food Accelerator programs, species/subsector-specific marketing entities, among other efforts.

Scope B

- A report on the economic value of Maine's seafood sector including the full value chain from catch/harvest, through processing, storage, distribution, and to the end user.

This written report(s) will be presented to the committee through an online virtual meeting or in-person presentation.

4. Request for Proposals and Project Timeline

All responses to this RFP are due electronically by 5pm EST on October 25, 2021, to Adam Burk, aburk@mdf.org

Questions concerning the project must be submitted by 12PM (noon) on October 25, 2021, to Adam Burk, aburk@mdf.org.

Proposals can be issued for either Scope A, Scope B, or both scopes to complete Phase 2. Evaluations of proposals will be completed with interviews to follow. Upon selection of a successful applicant, contract negotiations will begin immediately.

5. Bidder Qualifications & Proposal Materials

Proposals will be accepted until 5 PM, October 25, 2021. Proposals must be no longer than 10 pages including a project narrative that clarifies the proposed study method, an itemized project budget, a budget justification, an example report outline, a list of proposed resources and references to be used in the generation of the studies and a project timeline. Respondent qualifications and references may be submitted in addition to the 10-page limit. No overhead charges will be allowed. Specific contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon the determination of the selected proposal.

Suggested proposal outline:

A. Detailed description of the methodology being proposed.

B. Work program outline detailing:

a. Tasks to be performed.

b. When each will be completed (timeline).

c. Tentative allocation of person days by task.

d. Schedule of work products.

C. Methods the Consultant proposes to use to manage the project and communicate with SEA Maine as to project progress and reviews.

D. Identification of key personnel to be assigned to the project and their roles, with resumes of all key personnel.

E. Budget: including hourly rates (inclusive of overhead and profit) for personnel or personnel categories.

F. Data expected to be provided by SEA Maine

Thank you for your interest in working on Phase 2 of the SEA Maine Market Development Strategy project.

Please contact Adam Burk, aburk@mdf.org if you plan to submit a proposal. We look forward to hearing from you.