

Request for Information

Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine

Maine's Marine Living Resources Economy Development of Career Profiles & Resources

Issue Date: Friday, Oct. 22, 2021

Closing Date: Friday, Nov. 19 , 2021

Part 1. Background & Opportunity

1.1 SEAMaine Background

The Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine (SEAMaine), is an industry-led initiative committed to growing Maine's Marine Living Resource Economy by developing a roadmap and action plan that will ensure a vibrant, innovative and resilient marine economy. We define Marine Living Resource Economy as seafood (capture and culture fisheries), processing and distribution, transportation/logistics, edible and non-edible products and product development, and related innovation, marketing and market development. Funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, Maine Technology Institute, FocusMaine, and Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center, SEAMaine brings together leaders from aquaculture and commercial fishing to identify strategies and targeted investments to help transition our heritage living marine economy into a modern engine for sustainable economic and job growth.

This initiative has working subcommittees focused on advancing key issues important to the future of Maine's Marine Living Resource Economy. Important to the Marine Living Resource Economy's competitiveness and growth is the ability to match the supply of skilled workers with the workforce demand of industry. Therefore, one of these subcommittees is concentrated on the sector's Workforce and Talent Development. Chaired by Kim Hamilton, president of

FocusMaine, this group includes approximately 14 members located across the state including associations and public and private entities including industry, associations, non-profits, and academia.

Subcommittee member organizations include:

- Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
- Bristol Seafood
- Educate Maine
- FocusMaine
- Gulf of Maine Research Institute
- Island Institute
- Maine Aquaculture Association
- Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center
- Maine Community College System
- Maine Lobster Dealers' Association
- Maine Sea Grant (including The Maine Aquaculture Hub)
- Southern Maine Community College
- University of Maine Aquaculture Research Institute
- University of New England
- Washington County Community College

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

1.2 Project Background

Maine's extensive, sparsely developed, 3,500 mile undulating coastline and proximity to the nutrient rich waters of the Gulf of Maine have favored an economy based on marine resources, and strong economic and cultural traditions connecting working waterfronts to the sea. In the twentieth century, wild harvests of fish and shellfish have declined because of overharvesting, disruption of marine ecosystems, and most recently from the impacts of climate change (warming waters, ocean acidification and the threat of invasive species). Within the New England groundfish industry, one study in 1998 estimated that 20,000 jobs had been lost resulting in a \$349 million reduction in regional revenues (McGinn, 1998). In the decade from 2001 to 2011 the number of New England groundfish boats making at least one annual fishing trip declined from more than 1,000 to under 400 (Labaree, 2012). Maine's active groundfish fleet now only contains about 40 boats. Thousands of Maine fishermen whose families may have been fishing for generations are challenged to find ways to make a livable wage from the sea (Johnson *et al.*, 2014). Former staples of the harvest like Atlantic cod, soft shell clams, sea urchins, and northern shrimp have been depleted or forbidden to catch by increasingly severe regulations. Other fisheries have imposed limited entry provisions (e.g. lobsters, glass eels and rockweed) with the effect that displaced fishermen may no longer seek income diversification by moving into another type of fishery. About 73% of Maine's commercial landings value is derived from lobster (Maine Department of Marine Resources, 2019). This puts the majority of Maine's commercial harvesters at financial risk if the lobster fishery ever collapses.

As the numbers of commercial fishermen decline, working waterfronts and the supporting infrastructure are also declining. Coastal communities whose culture and societies were traditionally centered on the ocean and the commercial exploitation of its resources are experiencing fundamental sociological change. Young people are finding it increasingly difficult to enter fisheries; and families who have fished for generations are abandoning their maritime heritage out of necessity. Members of the fishing industry are currently seeking ways to diversify from a reliance on a single species (e.g. lobster; Cleaver *et al.* 2018).

Imagine what Maine could be if our wild-caught fisheries, aquaculture businesses, fishermen, and sea-farmers, were granted opportunities to diversify their businesses and put more seafood on plates in Maine, the US and across the globe. Already, the seafood that comes from our coastal waters and the working communities along Maine's coast drive a large portion of the \$6 Billion tourism industry within the state. With global trade pressures and the impacts of the looming climate crisis on Maine's most treasured export, the lobster, we need to capture more benefits from this industry to ensure a strong and resilient living marine economy.

Through diversification of markets, products, and species we can build more resiliency into Maine's marine resource economy so that the economy can fully maximize its potential. Seafood is one of the most sustainably grown and harvested foods for human consumption. Compared to other types of food production, it has far less environmental impact, and in some cases even improves environmental quality.

Supported by investments in workforce, infrastructure and innovation, Maine's Marine Living Resource Economy is poised to attract and retain more workers, pump more money and investments into local economies, and to preserve the working characteristics of our coastal communities that attract millions of tourists (and their dollars) each year. In the 1800's Maine's farm sector gave the State the moniker of the 'Breadbasket of New England'; Our seafood economy, well supported by these efforts, can transform Maine into the "Fish-tote" for New England and beyond for years to come.

1.3 Purpose of the RFI

The purpose of this RFI is to allow the Committee to assess supplier responses and use the resultant assessments in future decision making about the Opportunity. While it is the intent of the Committee to compare supplier responses for the purposes of understanding service offerings and pre-qualification and possible short listing for further consideration, the Committee makes no obligations or undertakings in any way to:

1. go to tender; or
2. accept any RFI information received from suppliers; or
3. include suppliers responding to this RFI in any future tender invitation; or

4. any other commitment to suppliers whatsoever, including any intention to form a contract with any supplier for provision of the Opportunity.

1.4 Opportunity

SEAMaine is interested in developing a better understanding of the work needed to build practical resources that:

1. raise awareness of the career opportunities with Maine's Marine Living Resources Economy;
2. support teachers and career advisors to promote Marine Living Resources Economy careers, prerequisites, and pathways;
3. highlight career profiles and training opportunities available within Maine's Marine Living Resource Economy, and improve access to career pathway information for students;
4. connect school counselors and educators and industry;
5. appeal to the environmental stewardship aspects of the industry that align with youth curriculum;
6. highlight the opportunities for innovation, resilience and discovery within the sector.

SEAMaine is seeking responses that increase our knowledge of related projects, relevant resources and insights to inform an implementation strategy. Responses should address the following questions:

1. What related projects and reports should we consider and review?
2. For which grade range should these career resources be developed, and why are these groups recommended?
3. How can this work create pathways for underrepresented groups to participate and build a sense of belonging in the effort?
4. How can we best support educators in adopting new career resources?
5. How can we best support industry in connecting to talent?
6. Who are the most important audiences for this project and potential partners?
7. What are anticipated deliverables for implementation of this project?

Part 2. Instructions

2.1 Key Dates

Please acknowledge your intention to respond to this RFI by sending an "Intention to Participate" email to Erica Watson, supporting Program Director with the Maine Development Foundation, at ewatson@mdf.org by Nov. 5 , 2021.

Any questions regarding the RFI should be submitted to Erica Watson no later than Nov. 12, 2021.

All responses to this RFI are due no later than Nov. 19, 2021 at 5pm (EST). Any responses received after this date and time will not be considered.

2.2 Questions

Suppliers are to direct any questions regarding the RFI content or process to the RFI contact. All questions should be submitted to the nominated email address during the RFI question period indicated above. The Committee may choose to convey responses to submitted questions to all suppliers so that each is equally informed.

2.3 Response Methods

Suppliers must submit their response in the following method:

1. By email to: ewatson@mdf.org. The subject heading of the email shall SEA Maine Educational Connections RFI. Only electronic copies are to be submitted in PDF format and suppliers may submit multiple emails (suitably annotated – ex. Email 1 of 3) if attached files are deemed too large to suit a single email transmission.
2. Size of emailed tender not to exceed 15MB.
3. SEAMaine will confirm receipt as they arrive with a confirmation email to sender.

2.4 Suppliers to Inform Themselves

The Committee has taken all reasonable care to ensure that the RFI is accurate; however, the Committee gives no representation or warranty as to the accuracy or sufficiency of the contained information.

2.5 Costs of Preparing the Response

All costs relating to the preparation and submission of a response are the sole responsibility of the supplier. The Committee shall not pay the supplier, wholly or in part, for its response.

2.6 Confidentiality

Except as required for the preparation of a response, suppliers must not, without the Committee's prior written consent, disclose to any third party any of the contents of the RFI documents.

Suppliers must ensure that their employees, consultants and agents also are bound and comply with this condition of confidentiality.

2.7 Acceptance of these Conditions

Suppliers, by submitting a response to this RFI, are deemed to have acknowledged and agreed to the conditions set out in this RFI.

Part 3. Information to be Provided

All responses must be signed by an official agent or representative of the company.

The following is the minimum information suppliers are required to provide to the Committee.

3.1 Supplier Details

1. Supplier name (Trading and Registered), registered address.
2. Details of supplier operating locations.
3. Supplier ownership information.
4. Relationships with any parent company (if applicable).
5. Details of joint venture arrangements (if applicable).

3.2 Supplier Capabilities and Experience

1. A description of the core supplier business.
2. Additional services, products and works provided outside of your core business.
3. Address specific questions related to the Opportunity:
 1. What related projects and reports should we consider and review?
 2. For which grade range should these career resources be developed, and why are these groups recommended?
 3. How can this work create pathways for underrepresented groups to participate and build a sense of belonging in the effort?
 4. How can we best support educators in adopting new career resources?
 5. How can we best support industry in connecting to talent?
 6. Who are the most important audiences for this project and potential partners?
 7. What are anticipated deliverables for implementation of this project?
4. Describe why you would be uniquely qualified to meet or exceed the requirements of this RFI.

5. If you have conducted similar projects, please indicate other factors that the committee should consider exploring to get the best result.

3.3 Certifications and Awards

1. Details of all certifications held (ex. ISO 9001) including date of last certification and details of the certifying body (copies of certifications may be appended to your response).

2. Details of any recent external corporate awards, including the awarding body, if relevant to the Opportunity.

3.4 Other Information

1. What information would be required by the supplier from the Committee to be able to submit pricing?

2. Please provide 3 relevant references including contact information.

3. Any further information you believe the Committee may require in support of its RFI review activities.

No contracts shall be made with parties listed on the General Services Administration's List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement or Nonprocurement Programs. All necessary steps will be taken to solicit participation of locally owned, minority-owned, female-owned and small businesses.

We plan to schedule one hour conference call meetings with each supplier to review the submitted information and provide the opportunity for the supplier to provide additional background relevant to this project.
