

Request for Proposals

Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine (SEA Maine) *Maine's Marine Living Resources Economy*

Marine Living Resource Economy: Global Opportunity Assessment

New Opportunities and Emerging Technology Subcommittee

Issue Date: November 21, 2022

Closing Date: December 23, 2022

1. BACKGROUND

SEA Maine Background

The Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine (SEA Maine), 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 (MLR) 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, SEA Maine 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 to target emerging technologies, research, and innovation on the forefront of the marine economy that increase commercialization, improve efficiency, support business development, and help create quality jobs. Therefore, one of these subcommittees is concentrated on the sector's New Opportunities and Emerging Technology. Co-chaired by Jake Ward and James Beaupre from the University of Maine, this group includes approximately 14 members located across the state such as associations and public and private entities including industry, associations, non-profits, and academia.

Subcommittee member organizations include:

- FocusMaine
- Gulf of Maine Research Institute
- Island Institute
- Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center
- Maine Aquaculture Association
- New England Ocean Cluster
- Kennebec River Bioscience
- Aquaculture Research Center
- Downeast Institute
- Ocean Organics
- Coastal Enterprises, Inc
- Greenhead Lobster
- Maine Shellfish
- Ready Seafood

SEA Maine 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 are intended to endure far into the future.

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 fishers 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 most Maine’s commercial harvesters at financial risk if the lobster fishery ever collapses.

As the numbers of commercial fishers 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 substantial 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. 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.

State of Maine background

In 2020, Maine’s Department of Economic and Community Development issued a [10-year strategic plan](#) focused on talent, innovation, infrastructure, and stable and predictable business rules. Also in 2020, the Maine Climate Council released [Maine Won’t Wait](#), a four-year plan for climate action in the state. Finally, the Maine Economic Growth Council publishes an annual [Measures of Growth](#) report, which tracks 25+ indicators that provide a snapshot of how Maine’s economy is performing. The most recent report was published in November 2022.

Purpose of the RFP

Project Scope:

The intent is to mine for opportunities and technologies that will support the long-term sustainability of Maine’s marine living resource sector. This includes opportunities to build on Maine’s existing products, technologies, and practices, and to horizon-scan for new opportunities. Using data and studies generated by SEA Maine and an assessment of Maine’s current position in both traditional and new/emerging marine living resource technology, product, or market sectors, we seek to understand the opportunities to:

- Develop existing markets,
- Create new markets,
- Grow or harvest new species
- Develop new products
- Develop technologies that would support and improve existing industry practices,
- Develop technologies that would lead to new markets and practices, and
- Understand how Maine's competitive advantages can support the development of these markets and technologies.

These opportunities should be evaluated on both short term (0-5 years) and long term (5-10 years) potential time horizons. A short list (10-20) of the most promising opportunities should be identified and the specific geographic areas (both domestically and globally) that would compete with Maine in these markets identified.

For the short-listed opportunities, evaluate:

- The market size and growth projections (in Maine, in North America, and globally)
- Key market players
- Distribution channels
- Trade flows
- Capital requirements
- Value add/revenue analysis
- Regulatory requirements
- Skills/training gaps

Next, identify Maine's competitive advantages/disadvantages in the most promising markets by identifying and then benchmarking against regions that currently dominate those markets. To contain costs, the supplier should utilize existing study data when possible. The committee shall provide Maine data and contact information where possible.

Areas of interest

The subcommittee is particularly interested in understanding the impact of the following broad areas of interest:

- New or emerging technologies for existing species and feedstocks (increased product value, process efficiencies)
- New species or market opportunities
- Long-term sector sustainability opportunities (climate change, policy challenges, species growth and decline)

- The potential of sector residuals (both marine and non-marine)

Deliverables:

- Identify a ranked short list of the most promising opportunities
- Provide comparisons showing how Maine would rank for competitiveness in the identified markets selected as compared with the previously identified regions.
- Identify the key areas of advantage and discuss how to leverage those.
- Identify the key areas of weakness and discuss how they can potentially be addressed.

These deliverables will be presented to: (1) the New Opportunities and Emerging Technology Subcommittee, and (2) the SEA Maine Executive Committee through online virtual meetings or in-person presentations. It is essential to provide an executive summary that captures the main points and recommendations. The subcommittee expects the applicants to work closely with a SEA Maine working group to ensure that needs are met.

Background provided by SEA Maine:

- Foundational Data Report and Dashboard
- [Multicultural Market Analysis \(Vietnam and Cambodia\)](#)
- Economic Impact Analysis
- [Seafood Promotional Council](#)
- Logistics and Transportation Study
- Residuals Report and Map
- Maine Aquaculture Workforce Development Study
- [Current State of Knowledge of Maine's Wild Catch Fisheries and Workforce](#)
- Workforce Toolboxes
- Workforce Needs Assessment

Additional studies:

- [Maine Algae Market Report](#)
- [Maine Farmed Shellfish Market Analysis](#)
- [Maine Aquaculture Roadmap](#)
- [Luke's Lobster Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#)
- [The Economic Contribution of Casco Bay](#)
- [Waypoints: Community Indicators](#)

2. INSTRUCTIONS

Key Dates

Any questions regarding the RFP should be submitted to the committee contact email address no later than *December 16, 2022*.

All responses to this RFP are due no later than December 23, 2022, at **5pm (EST)**. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be considered.

Committee Contact

The following individual is the contact for the RFP:

Anne Schlitt, Senior Program Director, MDF

Email: aschlitt@mdf.org

Questions

Suppliers are to direct any questions regarding the RFP content or process to the RFP contact.

All questions should be submitted to the nominated email address during the RFP question period indicated above. The Committee may choose to convey responses to submitted questions to all suppliers so that each is equally informed.

Proposal Methods

Suppliers must submit their response in the following method:

By email to: aschlitt@mdf.org. The subject heading of the email shall be SEA Maine: Global Opportunity Assessment RFP. 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.

Proposal Requirements

This request for proposals represents the requirements for an open and competitive process under federal guidelines for procurement by competitive proposal. In competitive proposal procurement, the proposal that is most advantageous to the program is selected, considering both price and other factors.

Proposals will be received until December 23, 2022, at 5pm (EST). Any proposals received after this date and time will not be considered. All proposals must be signed by an official agent or representative of the company submitting the proposal.

Proposals must be no longer than 5 pages including a project narrative that clarifies the proposed study method, an itemized project budget, a budget justification, an example study 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 5-page limit. No overhead charges will be allowed. Specific contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon the determination of the selected proposal. Bidders must complete the Fixed Price Summary Sheet (found below).

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.

If the organization submitting the proposal must outsource or contract any work to meet the requirements herein, this must be clearly stated in the proposal. Additionally, all costs included in the proposal must be all-inclusive to include any outsourced or contracted work. Any proposals which call for outsourcing or contracted work must include a name and description of the organizations being contracted. All costs included in the proposal must be itemized to include an explanation of all costs and fees.

Please note that all deliverables will become public information.

Contract terms will be negotiated upon selection of the winning bidder for this RFP. All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to legal review and will include scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary items pertaining to the project.

Bidders must return a completed copy of form CD-512, with their bid. Available at http://ci.noaa.gov/sites/lci/Documents/Forms/funding_forms_CD-512.pdf

Project Budget

All proposals must include proposed costs to complete the tasks described in the scope of work. All costs and fees must be clearly described in the attached Fixed Price Summary Sheet. Proposals should include a breakdown of cost and hours for each task of the scope of work.

Bidder Qualifications

All bidders should provide the following information as part of their proposal for consideration

Personnel

- a) Anticipated personnel you will assign to this project (name, title, summary of their academic background and professional experience) and description of what their role in this project will be and where they are located.

Supplier Details

- a) Supplier name (Trading and Registered), registered address.
- b) Details of supplier operating locations.
- c) Supplier ownership information.
- d) Relationships with any parent company (if applicable).
- e) Details of joint venture arrangements (if applicable).

Supplier Capabilities and Experience

- a) A description of the core supplier business, listing relevant case studies or examples (a maximum of three) that support this description. Where possible, include case studies that may relate to activities consistent with the Opportunity. Within the necessary boundaries of confidentiality, please be as specific as possible.
- b) Additional services, products and work provided outside of your core business.
- c) Describe why you would be uniquely qualified to meet or exceed the requirements of this request.
- d) The sub-committee would appreciate experience from other states or countries with high-performing seafood economies

e) If you have conducted similar projects, please indicate other factors not listed in the Opportunity that the committee should consider exploring to get the best result.

Certifications and Awards

- a) 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).
- b) Details of any recent external corporate awards, including the awarding body, if relevant to the Opportunity.

Other Information

- a) Briefly address your suggested approach for each of the project areas
- b) Please provide 3 relevant references including contact information.
- d) Any further information/opportunities you believe the Committee may require.

Suppliers to inform themselves

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

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.

Confidentiality

Except as required for the preparation of a proposal, suppliers must not, without the Committee's prior written consent, disclose to any third party any of the contents of the RFP documents. Suppliers must ensure that their employees, consultants, and agents also are bound and comply with this condition of confidentiality.

Acceptance of these Conditions

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

3. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

All proposals received in advance of the solicitation deadline will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Overall proposal suitability (0-40 points): Proposal must meet the scope and needs included here and be presented in a clear and organized manner. Proposals that are action-oriented and provide products and recommendations that can be quickly implemented will be scored higher.
- Expertise, experience, and previous work (0-30 points): bidders will be evaluated on their experience as it pertains to the scope of this project and previous projects completed successfully, as well as on their staff's expertise and experience.
- Value and cost (0-30 points): bidders will be evaluated on the cost of their analysis based on the work to be performed in accordance with the scope of this project.

Non-response bids or proposals (i.e., those with material deficiencies, omissions, errors, or inconsistencies) will not be considered.

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.

The Committee makes no obligations or undertakings in any way to:

1. go to tender; or
2. accept any RFP information received from suppliers; or
3. include suppliers responding to this RFP 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.

The committee may choose to schedule one hour conference call meetings with suppliers to review the submitted information and provide the opportunity for the supplier to provide additional background relevant to this project.

A contract will be made in writing to the proposal which is most advantageous to the program considering the evaluation criteria specified. This will be the finalist with the highest score assigned by the review committee.

The committee may select project components from multiple proposals and seek to arrange opportunities for collaboration between suppliers.

Thank you for considering a response to this RFP. Please reach out to Anne Schlitt (aschlitt@mdf.org) with questions.

APPENDIX A: FIXED PRICE SUMMARY SHEET

Bidder: _____

Instruction to Bidder:

Complete all the sections below; failure to do so may disqualify the bids. If the inquiry is divided into more than one bid item, complete a "Summary Sheet" for each item.

a. **Labor Cost** \$ _____

Estimated hours _____

b. **Materials** \$ _____

c. **Direct Expenses**

Sub-Contractors (add additional sub-contractors as necessary)

Name

Description of Work

\$ _____

Travel \$ _____

Other Expenses \$ _____

d. **In Person Meetings** \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE FOR THIS COMPONENT: _____

A fixed price summary sheet should be completed for each section of the scope of work.