

**Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council**

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Richard B. Robins, Jr., Chairman | Lee G. Anderson, Vice Chairman

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

MEMORANDUM**Date:** September 24, 2015**To:** Council**From:** Mary Clark**Subject:** Cooperative Research Update

At the August 2014 Council meeting, the Council voted to suspend the RSA program for 2015. This decision was based on ongoing concerns about operational issues that may have contributed to making the program vulnerable to abuse (non-reporting of RSA catch) as well as concerns regarding the science being generated by the program. This hiatus in the RSA Program was intended to allow adequate time for a thorough review of the Council's involvement in cooperative research and an evaluation of alternative options.

Staff is currently developing a white paper which will detail a range of options for the Council's continued involvement in, and support of, cooperative research. This approach involves development of discrete sets of alternatives for each of four "prongs" of a cooperative research program: (1) research priority setting, (2) funding, (3) administration, and (4) scientific review.

The following objectives, which were supported by the Council at the June 2015 meeting, are being used to guide the development of these alternatives:

1. Facilitate scientific research that addresses the Council's research priorities;
2. Provide opportunities primarily for fishing industry involvement in research projects and ensure that opportunities for participation are appropriately communicated;
3. Establish a thorough and uniform process for the scientific review of research results;
4. Promote the use of cooperative research products in management decisions;
5. Communicate research results to the public and to appropriate management partners;
6. Ensure that the program can be efficiently administered and effectively enforced.

Below is a proposed timeline for completion of this project.

June 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cooperative Research Committee meets to review and provide input on staff approach- Council reviews and approves Committee recommendations
Oct – Nov 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Technical working group formed- Applications solicited for Cooperative Research Advisory Panel
December 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Committee meets to review progress and provide input on draft white paper

Winter 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AP and technical working group meetings
Winter/Spring 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff continues development of cooperative research alternatives with input from working group and AP - Committee meeting, if necessary, to review progress and refine options
Summer 2016 (tentative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final decision on a long-term approach for Council-supported cooperative research.

Near-Term Cooperative Research Initiative

In addition to the process described above, the Council has undertaken a short-term cooperative research initiative with the intent of funding several cooperative research projects over the next 1-2 years. This project is similar to the one undertaken by the New England Fishery Management Council (see references below for details) and will involve contracting with a third-party organization to manage one or more cooperative research projects that address Council-defined research priorities. The contracted organization would be responsible for all tasks typically involved in cooperative research program administration. The Council is currently has published a Request for Proposals (enclosed behind this memo) for an organization or individual to manage this project.

At the October 2015 Council meeting, the Council will identify several cooperative research priorities that will guide the solicitation and selection of research proposals. Once a contractor has been selected, the Council will work with that organization or individual to develop a second RFP soliciting proposals for research projects that address these Council-defined priorities.

Additional Information

- [NEFMC Request for Proposals \(RFP\) Managing Collaborative Research](#), March 28, 2014
- [The New England Fishery Management Council and Collaborative Research: An Investment in the Future](#), September 23, 2014
- [NEFMC Groundfish Research Program Request for Proposals](#), September 2014
- [Northeast Consortium/NEFMC Announce Funded Collaborative Research Projects](#), March 17, 2015



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: Managing Cooperative Fisheries Research

Proposal Submission Deadline: 9/25/2015

Available Funds: \$500,000

Term of Contract: 18 – 24 months

RFP Closing Date: 9/25/2015, 11:59 p.m. EST

Point of Contact: Dr. Christopher Moore, Executive Director

Email: cmoore@mafmc.org

Phone: (302) 526-5255

Purpose

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) is accepting proposals to manage a short-term (2015-2017) cooperative research program focusing on Mid-Atlantic fisheries. The Council intends to invest approximately \$500,000 in research projects that will address specific research questions related to the Council's managed fisheries in the Mid-Atlantic. The Council will consider a broad range of projects, and preference will be given to projects that have an on-the-water component.

The Council seeks to partner with an organization that would be contracted to manage this effort.

Scope of Work

The organization would be expected to:

1. Solicit proposals to address specific research questions identified by the Council;
2. Receive, review, and evaluate proposals in response to the solicitation;
3. Coordinate selection of proposals with the Council or its representatives, as required by the Council;
4. After identification of funded proposals, notify applicants and assist applicants in obtaining any special permits or other types of authorizations and approvals that may be required;
5. Receive completed research reports and facilitate review of those reports as required by the Council;
6. Disburse funds for selected research programs. Final funds disbursement for projects will depend on successful project completion and report review;
7. Provide periodic reports to the Council on the proposal application and review process, as well as the status of funds;
8. Track progress of projects and provide progress reports when requested; and
9. After completion of all projects, provide a written final report that details all the projects awarded, whether they were completed successfully and how much was paid for each.



Contractor Qualifications

1. Record of success in managing similar programs.
2. Experience with oversight of research projects that address the conservation of natural resources.
3. Experience managing fisheries research projects, and in particular projects associated with Mid-Atlantic fisheries, is preferred.
4. Demonstrated record of successful relationships with non-traditional research partners, such as fishing businesses or organizations.
5. Potential to leverage Council funds with matching funds from other organizations.

Proposal Format/Qualifications

1. **Executive Summary:** Respondents should provide a summary of their company, organization, institution and any related partners, as well as their qualifications.
2. **Qualifications:**
 - 2a. *Statement of Qualifications:* In addition to the Executive Summary, all proposals must include a statement of qualifications, which describes the experience and history of the Respondent company, organization, or institution and other team members, if applicable. The proposal should specifically indicate the Respondent's current and historical expertise in providing the services identified in this RFP.
 - 2b. *Staffing Plan and Qualifications:* Names and qualifications of the key personnel. Identify all key personnel who are to be part of the project team and provide curriculum vitae for each.
 - 2c. *References:* All proposals must include references from at least three clients of the Respondent, and preferably clients who have utilized the Respondent on matters related to the requested services. The references must include a contact person, a full address, and a phone number. In addition to the foregoing, all proposals must include a listing of public and private clients for whom the firm has provided services similar to those set forth in this RFP, with a description of the services provided.
3. **Proposed Approach and Comments on Scope of Work:** A detailed description of the process that will be used to manage this project and a schedule of tasks to be performed during the course of the project. Provide comments on the scope of work as it relates to the management of the project.
4. **Proposed Fee Structure (Budget & Rate Sheet):** All responses must include detailed information on the proposed budget for the requested services, including the basis for charges (e.g., hourly rates, fixed fee).

Proposal Submission

Interested parties must submit a proposal by COB September 25, 2015. The proposal may be mailed or emailed to the Council's point of contact identified below.



RFP Timeline

The Council anticipates that the selection of a successful respondent and execution of contract will proceed according to the following approximate schedule:

8/25/2015	Issuance of RFP
9/25/2015	Deadline for proposal submission
10/19/2015	Contract Execution (or as soon thereafter as practical)
11/2/2015	Commencement of Work (or as soon thereafter as practical)

Anticipated Term of Contact

The final contract is subject to successful negotiation of the budget and scope of services. It is expected that the contract will commence in November 2015 and last for a period of 18 – 24 months. The contract will be reviewed during its course and may be extended at the sole discretion of the Council.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on prior experience, references and qualifications, understanding of work, and price. The Council may, at its discretion, request additional information from any respondents as deemed necessary to clarify or negotiate modifications to the proposal.

Requests for Further Information

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Disclaimer

1. All costs associated with the preparation and presentation of the proposal will be borne by participating vendors.
2. Proposals and their accompanying documentation will not be returned.
3. Respondents must disclose any relevant conflicts of interest and/or pending lawsuits.
4. The Council reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, negotiate with all qualified applicants, cancel or modify the RFP in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests