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SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

Alaska Mariculture Cluster

Mariculture Processing Feasibility Studies RFP

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP #2023-04
EDA Project Number 07-79-0794

Date of Issue: 10/06/2023

Proposals Due: ~~11/17/2023~~ extended to ~~11/24/2023~~ **12/11/2023**

Summary:

Southeast Conference is soliciting proposals from qualified teams to conduct feasibility studies that further the Alaska Mariculture Cluster's goal of increasing regional processing capacity for mariculture products in Alaska. Feasibility studies can address a variety of topics, including supply/demand assessment, assessment of existing or underutilized infrastructure, architectural/engineering services to support capital and operations cost estimation, financial feasibility studies, and/or operations planning. Projects must be working toward the operation, construction, or renovation/expansion of mariculture processing, handling, and/or storage facilities in Alaska. Proposals should support multiple users and address regional needs in a coordinated fashion, and must be coordinated with Alaska Native or Tribal entities.

Background:

Southeast Conference – the state and federally recognized economic development organization for Southeast Alaska – is the lead institution administering a federal grant from the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) to grow Alaska's mariculture industry through the Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) program. The Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) grant coalition includes a diverse group of stakeholders including Alaska state regulatory agencies, Alaska's university system, Economic Development Districts, trade organizations and more. A Governance Body,

composed of AMC coalition leads as well as Tribal representatives from each of the project regions, guides the work and equity metrics of the overall grant. The Alaska Mariculture Cluster has an overall equity goal that applies to all projects. Specifically, 25% of AMC program impacts and investments are targeted to rural underserved communities and 25% to Alaska Native entities and individuals.

The AMC grant is composed of seven component projects (listed below), which have been purposely designed to be complementary to address barriers to growth and break out of the “chicken or egg” cycle of industry development:

- Revolving Loan Fund
- Governance, Coordination and Outreach
- Workforce Development
- Research and Development
- Market Development
- Green Energy
- **Equipment and Technology**

The Equipment and Technology component – of which this feasibility study RFP is a part – includes other projects that also support increasing mariculture processing capacity in Alaska. Most notably, the grant includes roughly \$7 million in funding for mariculture processing or hatchery/nursery equipment purchases by EDA-eligible entities. Proposals for equipment purchases will be procured under a separate RFP to be released in November 2023 (with roughly one third of the funds available at that time and the remaining held back for subsequent iterations later in the 4-year grant program).

The full project period for the AMC BBBRC project is October 1, 2022 – September 30th, 2026. More information on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) is available at www.alaskamariculturecluster.org, including the Overarching Narrative, which explains how the seven components work together to grow the mariculture industry in an equitable and environmentally responsible manner.

Eligible Entities:

Entities submitting proposals under this RFP must be EDA-eligible entities or be working in partnership with an EDA-eligible entity (non-profit organizations, EDA-designated economic development districts,

Tribes and Alaska Native corporations, local and state governments and their subdivisions, tribal cooperatives, and institutions of higher education).

Scope of Work:

Southeast Conference is soliciting proposals from qualified teams to conduct feasibility studies that further the Alaska Mariculture Cluster's goal of increasing regional processing capacity for mariculture products in Alaska.

Feasibility studies can address a variety of topics, including supply/demand assessment, assessment of existing or underutilized infrastructure, architectural/engineering services to support capital and operations cost estimation, financial feasibility studies, and/or operations planning. Projects must be working toward the operation, construction, or renovation/expansion of mariculture processing, handling, and/or storage facilities in Alaska.

Projects should support multiple users and address regional needs in a coordinated fashion. Proposals must also demonstrate collaboration with and support from local or regional Tribal entities and/or Alaska Native corporations, businesses, and individuals.

Funding Available:

Funding is secured through the Equipment & Technology component of the AMC grant. Selected proposals will be funded for a timeline of up to 12 months. **Start dates must be between January 15, 2024, and February 29, 2024.** The number of projects funded and award amounts will depend on the quantity and quality of proposals received. Proposals may only request funding up to \$150,000.

General Requirements:

Single Point of Contact. The consultant will designate one person as the project manager and point of contact with SEC. In the case of multiple investigators, one shall be designated as the lead to serve as the project manager and point of contact.

Progress Reports. Updates will be submitted to SEC monthly, detailing progress to date, any difficulties encountered in accomplishing the work, and next steps planned.

Disbarment. Applicants must have or acquire a UEI through SAM.gov prior to award finalization. Applicants, including any subcontractors, must not be disbarred from receiving federal funds.

Public Information. All products produced under this RFP will become publicly available on completion.

Proposal Contents:

Proposals are expected to be no more than 8-10 pages in length, excluding resumes or letters of support which may be attached. Letters of support should generally be one page or less in length.

Proposals should include the following components:

- **Project Context and Impact.** Include a discussion of project context and importance, any related work completed to date, and how the project addresses a regional need. Letters of support from local and regional stakeholders are encouraged.
 - All proposals must demonstrate collaboration with and support from local or regional Tribal entities and/or Alaska Native corporations, businesses, and individuals.
- **Project Overview.** Describe the proposed feasibility study including deliverables, timelines, and methodology. Proposers should compile the team needed to complete the work, including any subcontractors.
- **Experience and Qualifications.** Describe relevant experience of the firm and key team members, including any subcontractors if part of your team. Relevant experience includes projects with related content as well as project experience working with rural, coastal, and/or indigenous stakeholders.
- **Management Plan.** Briefly describe how the work will be managed including the role of each key individual/subcontractor expected to be involved in the work and their availability to complete the work.
- **Costs.** Provide a list of the key individuals/subcontractors expected to work on this project, the fully loaded rates charged per individual, any estimated travel costs or other expenses, and total cost for each deliverable.

Proposal Submission Process:

Deadline. Submit proposals in pdf format by ~~11/17/2023~~ extended to ~~11/24/2023~~ **12/11/2023** by 5pm AST via email to procurement officer Alan Sorum at alan@seconference.org and project manager Juliana Leggitt at juliana@seconference.org.

- Proposers are encouraged to verify with the procurement officer that the proposal has been received prior to the deadline.
- Proposals received after the deadline may be considered but only if they can be accommodated by SEC's review process. Additional information provided after the deadline may also be considered but only if such information can be accommodated by the review process.

Public Information: Proposals and work plans may be distributed throughout the organization for review and comment. Proprietary information should not be submitted in any proposal. SEC will not knowingly reveal the contents of a proposal that is not subsequently accepted for contract; however, SEC accepts no liability should such contents inadvertently be revealed to third parties.

Changes. Any changes or addendum will be posted on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster website and sent directly to respondents who have specifically requested notification.

Preparation Costs. SEC is not liable for any costs incurred by the proposer during the proposal preparation.

Questions. Inquiries regarding this request for qualifications shall be directed to procurement officer Alan Sorum at alan@seconference.org and project manager Juliana Leggitt at juliana@seconference.org.

Evaluation Criteria and Award Process:

All proposals must demonstrate collaboration with and support from local or regional Tribal entities and/or Alaska Native corporations, businesses, and individuals. Consideration will be given to ensure a

spread of projects between the four regions identified in the AMC grant (Southeast Alaska, Prince William Sound, Kenai Peninsula, and Kodiak/Aleutians).

Criteria for evaluating proposals is as follows:

- Project viability and likelihood of eventual success adding mariculture processing capacity in Alaska (20%)
- Demonstration of regional impact and broad support from entities such as local government, Tribe or Alaska Native organizations, and local industry participants (20%)
- Past experience on relevant or similar projects (20%)
- Methods are appropriate and there is a demonstrated ability to complete deliverables successfully and within a reasonable timeline (20%)
- Costs are reasonable and fall within available funding levels (20%).

Scoring of each proposal against the criteria listed above will be conducted by an RFP review committee. SEC reserves the right to reject any and all of the proposals received. If necessary, SEC may select the proposals that, in its sole view, most nearly conform to its needs as outlined in this RFP and then negotiate directly with that proposer to refine the proposal to achieve a contract that fully satisfies SEC needs.

A notice of intent to award is expected to be announced by December 31, 2023.

[About Southeast Conference:](#)

As the state and federally designated regional economic development organization for Southeast Alaska, Southeast Conference serves as the collective voice for advancing the region's economy. Southeast Conference has over 200 member organizations representing 1,200 people from 32 regional communities and 19 Tribes. The mission of Southeast Conference is to undertake and support activities that promote strong economies, healthy communities, and a quality environment in Southeast Alaska. Southeast Conference formed in 1958 with a group of people supporting the establishment of a regional transportation system in Southeast Alaska, which led to the formation of the Alaska Marine Highway System. After that success Southeast Conference stayed together through more than a half-

century to focus on concerns unique to the region, including transportation, maritime, tourism, seafood, natural resources, health care, government, and overall quality of life.