

Request for Proposals:

Research on Kelp Restoration in California Urchin Fisheries



Issue Date: October 11, 2021

Deadline for Pre-Proposal Submissions: November 19, 2021

Proposal Schedule

- October 11, 2021: Request for Proposal (RFP) issued and distributed
- November 5, 2021: Deadline for written questions regarding this RFP
Please email questions to Michael Arredondo at marredondo@psmfc.org
- November 12, 2021: Q&A document, including the answer to the written questions posted on the PSMFC website at: <http://www.psmfc.org/procurements>
- November 19, 2021: Deadline for submission of pre-proposals
Proposals must be submitted by e-mail to: marredondo@psmfc.org
Subject line for submissions: Red Sea Urchin Mitigation Research
Faxed and hard copy proposals will not be accepted.
- November 22 –
December 3, 2021: Pre-Proposal review
- December 6, 2021: Full-proposals requested from selected applicants
- January 14, 2021: Full-proposals due
- January 31, 2021: Proposal applicants notified of recommendations
- February 15, 2022 –
June 30, 2024: Anticipated Project Period

Funding Opportunity Description

Summary

The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC), in cooperation with the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), will be issuing \$656,734 in grants to fund projects that investigate ways to improve resiliency in California's urchin fisheries and mitigate the effects of kelp loss.

Funding is available for up to 2 years and research must be completed by June 30, 2024.

High priority will be given to projects located in northern California, (north of the Monterey/San Luis Obispo County line) and utilize commercial red sea urchin fishery participants. Projects solely focused on southern California (south of the Monterey/San Luis Obispo County line) will not be considered.

Four areas of interest include:

1. Kelp forest restoration. Specific projects of interest include restoration, rehabilitation, and enhancement of kelp forest ecosystems promoting immediate and long-term recovery.

2. Marketing. Specific projects of interest include evaluation of strategies to add value to red sea urchin and further develop markets for purple sea urchin including non-consumptive products.
3. Recruitment Studies. Specific projects of interest include assessment and evaluation of the factors affecting recruitment of sea urchin and keystone invertebrate predators within kelp ecosystems.
4. Socioeconomic assessments. Specific projects would contribute to an increased understanding of the red sea urchin fishery collapse, its effect on localized economies within the California fishing communities and inform strategies to better mitigate against future losses in the fishery.

The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) will be issuing \$656,734 in grants to qualified projects. At least 50% of available funds will be awarded to kelp forest restoration and marketing topics; no more than 50% of the funds will be awarded to recruitment studies and socioeconomic assessment projects.

Successful award of grant funds does not relieve the recipient from the responsibility to obtain any other required permit(s), or comply with any other Federal, State, or local laws and regulations.

Eligible Applicants

Researchers at U.S. academic institutions, research laboratories, for-profit companies/firms, nonprofits, and state agencies are all eligible. Proposals from foreign entities are not eligible. Proposals involving multiple investigators are welcome. Any U.S. federal government agencies, including Regional Fishery Management Councils are not eligible to receive funding through this solicitation.

Application and Submission Information

PRE-PROPOSAL APPLICATION

Pre-proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. PST on November 19, 2021 to marredondo@psmfc.org

Initial proposals (2-page limit) will allow the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission along with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and a panel of industry stakeholders to assess research proposals in relation to identified research priorities and available funding.

Pre-proposals should include the following information:

- Name of applicant and contact information
- Title of project
- Brief discussion of the focal topic and approach
- Approximate funding to be requested

An individual may submit more than one pre-proposal but only one project may be funded to the lead PI. However, lead PIs may act as co-PIs and partners on other projects being considered.

If selected for further consideration, applicants will be asked to fill out a full proposal.

FULL PROPOSALS CONTENT

The full proposal format must be in at least a **12-point font**. Brevity will assist reviewers and program staff in dealing effectively with proposals. Tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations are included in the **5-page proposal limit**. Data management plans and/or access agreements as well as budgets and justifications, project summary, and previous, current and pending support sections do not count towards the page limit. Appendices may include information such as resumes and/or letters of endorsement.

Additional informational material will be disregarded.

Proposals must include the following information in the format outlined below.

a. Project summary (1-page limit):

- (1) Organization title.
- (2) Principal Investigator(s) (PI).
- (3) Address, telephone number, and email address of Principal Investigator(s).
- (4) Project title.
- (5) Project objectives for the project period.
- (6) Summary of work to be performed within the project period.
- (7) Summary of required state/federal permits to conduct work
- (8) Budget Information
 - Total funds requested from PSMFC;
 - Current and pending support (if applicable)
 - Cost sharing to be provided to this project, if any (not required). Specify whether contributions are cash or in kind;
 - Total project cost.

b. Project description (5 page limit): Each project must be completely and accurately described. The main body of the proposal should be a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and should include: specific objectives and performance measures for the period of the proposed work and the expected significance; relation to longer-term goals of the project; and relation to other work planned, anticipated, or underway.

c. Project Budget: You must include in the proposal a detailed narrative for each category providing an explanation and/or process for how the funds will be used and/or allocated. Describe and justify the budget for each organization or agency requesting funding in this proposal using the mandatory budget categories listed below.

- **Personnel (including Fringe Benefits):** Include the salary detail for all employees assigned to this project. Explain the duties for each individual identified by name and position. State the time commitments such as hours and percent of time for each position. List the total charges for each person. Provide detail on all fringe benefits in correlation to the employee's hourly wage and the number of hours to be worked in association with the proposed project. Identify what types of fringe benefits are being covered. Describe the total charges for each person listed along with an explanation of how the charges were calculated.

- **Travel:** These costs include lodging, airfare, per diem, ground transportation and other directly related expenses incurred while traveling for the purpose of the proposed project. Include each traveler's name, dates of travel, purpose of travel, destination, and itemized costs to include lodging, airfare, per diem, ground transportation, etc. Identify why the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. If there are any actual trip details that remain unknown, please explain what the basis for the proposed travel charges.
- **Contractual:** Include all expenditures associated with contractually-related activities that are directly associated with the proposed project. List each contract as a separate item. Describe the applicability to the project for each contract to be acquired.
- **Supplies:** Include a description of all equipment that individually costs under \$5,000 and miscellaneous supplies and materials that are required for the purpose of the proposed project. Itemize supplies by type of material or nature of expense. Identify how the proposed supplies are necessary for the successful completion of the project.
- **Equipment:** Include items that individually cost more than \$5,000. For any items of equipment whose costs exceed \$5,000, a description of the item and associated costs is required. List each item of equipment being requested. For each item of equipment, please identify the number of units, cost per unit and total cost specified. Explain why each item of equipment is necessary for the successful completion of the project.
- **Indirect Costs:** These are costs incurred by the investigating organization as a result of administering the proposed project but not directly associated with project implementation. Indirect costs generally include space rental, utilities, postage, data processing, training, safety management, affirmative action programs, administrative support, and supervisory oversight. **NOTE:** All proposals must include copy of the approved negotiated indirect cost rate document or similar verifying your indirect rate as part of your proposal package. Our intent is that institutions undertaking research apply funds to expenses directly related to the project, and have the ability to complete the project with low indirect cost rates.

Instructions, Conditions and Notices to Proposers

1. Questions regarding this RFP shall be submitted in writing no later than **October 22, 2021** to:

Michael Arredondo
205 SE Spokane Street, Suite 100
Portland, OR 97202
Email: marredondo@psmfc.org
Phone: (503) 595 - 3100
Fax: (503) 595 - 3444

The subject line of emailed questions must be entitled: "Red Sea Urchin Mitigation Research RFP Questions".

The answers to the written questions will be posted on PSMFC's website by **October 28, 2021**

2. Amendments to the Solicitation

If this solicitation is amended, all terms and conditions that are not amended remain unchanged. Proposers shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to this solicitation in Proposer's cover letter.

3. Submission, Modification Revision and Withdrawal of Proposals

a. The deadline for pre-proposals is **November 19, 2021**:

Attn: Michael Arredondo
205 SE Spokane Street, Suite 100
Portland, OR 97202
Email: marredondo@psmfc.org
Phone: (503) 595 – 3100
Fax: (503) 595 – 3444

b. PSMFC reserves the right to consult with and to consider information from its own sources, including information from state and federal agencies regarding the proposer's prior performance or the status of outstanding investigations or warrants involving the proposer.

c. Late proposals

i. Any proposal, modification, or revision at the PSMFC office designated in the solicitation after the exact time specified for receipt to offers is "late" and will not be considered unless it is received before award is made, the PSMFC Fiscal Manager determines that accepting the late offer would not unduly delay the acquisition; and

ii. There is acceptable evidence to establish that it was received at the PSMFC installation designation for receipt of offers and was under the PSMFC's control prior to the time set for receipt to offers; or

iii. It is the only proposal received.

iv. However, a late modification of an otherwise successful proposal that makes its terms more favorable to the PSMFC, will be considered at any time it is received and may be accepted.

v. Acceptable evidence to establish time of receipt at the PSMFC installation includes the time/date stamp of that installation on the proposal wrapper, other documentary evidence of receipt maintained by the installation, or oral testimony or statements of PSMFC personnel.

d. If an emergency or unanticipated event interrupts normal PSMFC processes so that

proposals cannot be received at the office designated for receipt of proposals by the exact time specified in the solicitation, and urgent PSMFC requirements preclude amendment of the solicitation, the time specified for receipt of proposals will be deemed to be extended to the same time of day specified in the solicitation on the first work day on which normal PSMFC processes resume.

e. Proposals may be withdrawn by written notice received at any time before award. Proposals may be withdrawn in person by an offer or an authorized representative, if the identity of the person requesting withdrawal is established and the person signs a receipt for the proposal before award.

f. Proposers shall submit proposals in response to this solicitation in English and in U.S. dollars.

g. Proposers may submit modifications to their proposals at any time before the solicitation closing date and time, and may submit modifications in response to an amendment, or to correct a mistake at any time before award.

h. Proposers may submit revised proposals only if requested or allowed by PSMFC.

i. Proposals may be withdrawn at any time before award. Withdrawals are effective upon receipt of notice by the Fiscal Manager.

j. Each Proposal must state that it is a firm offer which may be accepted within a period of ninety (90) days. Although the contract is expected to be awarded prior to that time, the ninety-day period is requested in order to allow for unforeseeable delays.

k. Proposer shall submit the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with the authority to bind the firm, as well as to answer questions or provide clarification concerning the firm's proposal.

l. PSMFC is not liable for any costs incurred by vendors/contractors in developing or submitting their response to this RFP.

Proposal Evaluation

1. All proposals received in accordance with these RFP instructions will be evaluated to determine if they are complete and meet the requirements specified in this RFP.

2. All proposals received in accordance with these RFP instructions will be reviewed, analyzed, evaluated and scored in accordance with the criteria described below. If needed, additional information may be requested from one or more proposers.

3. Request for additional information. During the evaluation period, PSMFC may request additional information in order to fairly evaluate a proposer's offer. If such information is required, the proposer will be notified in writing (or by email) and will be permitted a reasonable period of time to respond.

4. Evaluation Criteria. By use of numerical and narrative scoring techniques, full proposals will be evaluated against the factors specified below. The relative weights of the criteria –based on a 100-point scale – are shown in parentheses. Projects must achieve a minimum qualifying score of 70 points. The evaluation criteria are as follows:

- a. Scope of Work Addresses Research Interests and Identified Priorities (30 points);
- b. Qualifications, experience, and ability to address research program priorities (20 points);
- b. Work Plan/Technical Approach (40 points);
- c. Cost/Project Budget (10 points)

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when financial interests or other opportunities for tangible personal or professional benefit could influence or appear to influence the professional judgment of a member of the Proposal Review Committee. Improper influence could be used to not only advance one's own research program, but also to unfairly promote a family member's, colleague's or former student's program. Thus, care must be exercised to avoid a conflict of interest during the proposal review process and the discussion of past, current or proposed research. A conflict of interest also exists when circumstances simply have the appearance of compromising the professional judgement of a member of the Proposal Review Committee. It is the policy of PSMFC that conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest shall be avoided wherever possible and disclosed and minimized in situations where interests cannot be reasonable separated. Whenever a conflict of interest arises during discussions of the Proposal Review Committee, the member in question shall disclose the possible conflict and excuse themselves from the discussion.

Grant Award

1. All qualified proposals will be evaluated, and awards will be made to those proposed projects whose combination of cost and technical offers is deemed to best address the research themes of this RFP. It is expected that the final awards to selected projects will begin on February 15, 2022.
2. PSMFC reserves the right to make an award for project at a cost that is less than what was proposed.
3. PSMFC expressly reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and make no award under this RFP if such action is in the best interest of the PSMFC.