



NROC
Northeast Regional
Ocean Council

Request for Proposals: To Develop Products Characterizing Marine Life Distribution, Abundance and Trends

Responses to questions received by the March 11, 2014 deadline and during the March 12, 2014 pre-submittal conference call.

BUDGET

1. *Task 1 – Given the unknowns associated with the number of expert committee meetings and number of participants (experts), please confirm that stipends and travel support for the meetings is not included in the budget.*

Answer: Stipends and travel support should be included in the budget if you choose to provide them to the expert committee(s).

2. *We understand leveraging existing work, funding or other in-kind services will be a significant portion of the “Cost Effectiveness” evaluation criteria. Is an in-kind service contribution required?*

Answer: No.

3. *Will the final contract be a Firm Fixed Price or Time and Material type contract?*

Answer: We expect and prefer Time and Materials, but are flexible based on the proposed approach and negotiations with the selected contractor.

4. *The request for a detailed budget uses the term “administrative overhead”. Can you clarify what is meant by this term? Is a fee or profit allowable for private corporations, and if so, how would that be displayed in the detailed budget? Will the grant have an indirect cost restriction or cap?*

Answer: There is no specific restriction associated with administrative overhead or indirect costs since the funding for this project is mixed (public and private sources). However, each proposal will be evaluated for their “cost effectiveness”. See the evaluation criteria on page 16 of the RFP for more information.

While there is no specific restriction, the majority of the funding comes from a private source that prefers a 12.5% cap on indirect costs. They define indirect costs as follows: “overhead expenses incurred by an organization but not easily tracked to a specific project. They generally include administrative or other support functions such as

executive oversight, institutional communication networks, accounting, grants management, legal support, insurance, utilities, technology, rent, and facility maintenance.”

5. *Can federal entities apply? Are there funding restrictions for feds?*

Answer: Yes, federal entities can apply, but cannot receive any of the public funds. Public funds account for less than 25% of the total budget. It is unlikely that a federal entity can be the prime since we prefer a single award for the entire project.

SCOPE – GENERAL

6. *Task 8 – Can NROC provide some clarification to the level of effort expected for participation in ongoing efforts to utilize products in additional assessments and contribute to regional ocean planning science plans? This task appears extremely open ended.*

Answer: We expect the contractor will be instrumental in informing any additional assessments that use the marine life products developed during this project and we would like the contractor to be available to inform ongoing activities for the period of time listed in the RFP. However, the contractor will not be expected to conduct any additional analyses or product development. The contractor will also contribute to a science plan by providing information about data priorities and potential methods to improve the products developed during this project.

7. *NROC intends to hire a single contractor but would it consider proposals for one of the aspects of marine life (fisheries, marine mammals/turtles, or avian)?*

Answer: Yes, but we prefer a single award to a team with the expertise and capacity to accomplish all of the objectives of the RFP.

SCOPE – MEETINGS

8. *Task 1 - How many expert committee meetings is NROC envisioning for this task?*

Answer: This depends on the proposed approach. We ask you to propose an approach for setting up and managing expert committee(s).

9. *Task 4 - How many public workshops, meetings and/or RPB meetings is NROC envisioning for this task? Task 6 – Does NROC anticipate a single workshop, public meeting and/or RPB meeting in the Fall of 2014 to review the draft products?*

Answer: At this point, we expect one workshop in the Spring of 2014, coinciding with the RPB meeting.

In the Fall of 2014, we expect a series of public meetings and/or workshops to obtain feedback on draft products and one RPB meeting. The specific number of public meetings and workshops has not been determined - it could be one meeting in each state or two larger events covering northern and southern New England, respectively.

Please see The Framework for Ocean Planning in the Northeast United States, developed by the Northeast Regional Planning Body, for additional information:

<http://neoceanplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/NE-Regional-Ocean-Planning-Framework-February-2014.pdf>

10. *Please confirm NROC's public engagement contractor will be responsible for arranging meeting locations, paying for venue, invitations, facilitation, and documentation for all external meetings in this contract.*

Answer: Yes, but we expect the contractor chosen through this RFP to participate significantly in the conduct of the meetings as stated in the RFP.

11. *Is the consultant required to attend committee meetings onsite? And if so what locations?*

Answer: Our preference is to conduct as many meetings as possible in-person. Specific locations have not been chosen, but will be in New England. The RFP requests respondents to propose an approach to conducting expert committee meetings.

12. *Can you please provide the location of the NROC public meetings mentioned in Task 6?*

Answer: Throughout New England. We don't have specific locations identified yet.

DATA, DATA LOGISTICS, TECHNOLOGY

13. *Task 2 – Please confirm that NROC will assist in securing marine life distribution and abundance data, metadata, models and products that are not publically or readily available.*

Answer: Yes.

14. *For the final data products do you see any GIS system development being conducted under this project or will all the deliverables be transferred to NROC portal for access and display?*

Answer: We prefer that all products be transferred to NROC for portal access and display, but this also depends on the proposed approach and whether the products can be displayed using the technology of www.northeastoceandata.org

15. *Can only data products be suggested or can the vendor suggest other type of product deliverables? If others are allowed, are there any technology restrictions that NROC cannot support?*

Answer: Yes, we welcome creativity in the types of products you propose. NROC will need technological support for products that cannot be displayed using the www.northeastoceandata.org platform or that cannot be read using typical GIS and desktop software.

16. *Regarding preference to transfer products developed through this proposal to the data portal – would current data portal contractor do this, and who is the current data portal contractor?*

Answer: This depends on the technology. Applied Science Associates is the contractor primarily responsible for transferring data products to the data portal. They will be able to provide support under their existing contract assuming the products are compatible with the data portal. Otherwise, the contractor hired through this RFP would have to provide technical support for other deliverable formats.

17. *Can any existing contractors associated with the data portal submit a proposal under this RFP?*

Answer: Yes.

18. *Please confirm if any data creation, manipulation or clean-up is anticipated under this contract, or will the contractor only be responsible to attain, assess potential data and identify an gaps or abnormalities and use the data in developing various maps, visualization tools and/or models?*

Answer: All of this is possible depending on the dataset in question and the proposed approach. We do not expect any new data creation in the form of new wildlife surveys.

19. *Can NROC assure that the data sources listed in the RFP are available for public use? Will there be potential restrictions for use only for research or private uses?*

Answer: Not all sources are available for public use. We will help acquire the data and address the associated restrictions.

20. *The RFP references the NOAA NCCOS predictive models for marine bird distribution and abundance – does this extend to the GoM? Only Mid-Atlantic models are currently available/reported online.*

Answer: NCCOS predictive bird models are complete for offshore NY and Mid-Atlantic regions (reaching as far north as the southern shore of Cape Cod). It is our understanding that NCCOS will be expanding this modeling effort to the entire U.S. Atlantic coast by 2016.

TIMING

21. *Would NROC consider extending the due date for proposals to April 3rd?*

Answer: No.

MISCELANIOUS

22. Please confirm cover letter, Table of Contents, Resume Appendix, and Related Experience Appendix are not included in the 15 page count for the proposal response.

Answer: Correct.

23. Would it be possible for a contractor under this RFP to be an author of scientific publications describing the work accomplished?

Answer: Yes, at the appropriate time.