



NROC
Northeast Regional
Ocean Council

Request for Proposals:

**TO DEVELOP A REGIONAL OCEAN PLANNING BASELINE
ASSESSMENT FOR THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES**

RFP Issued:

March 31, 2014

Proposals Due:

May 2, 2014

Northeast Regional Ocean Council Request for Proposals: TO DEVELOP A REGIONAL OCEAN PLANNING BASELINE ASSESSMENT FOR THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

Part 1: Scope of Work

- 1. Statement of Purpose:** The Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) is seeking proposals for contractor assistance to develop a baseline assessment in support of regional ocean planning. NROC is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) on behalf of the Northeast Regional Planning Body (RPB), which is the formal entity (pursuant to the National Ocean Policy) with the responsibility of developing a regional ocean plan for New England. Work conducted under the contract stemming from this RFP will directly support regional ocean planning activities and RPB decisions in New England.

The RPB has established “Healthy Ocean and Coastal Ecosystems” as one of its three overarching goals for regional ocean planning in New England and has developed objectives, actions and specific tasks aimed at achieving these goals (www.neoceanplanning.org). The first objective under this goal is to characterize the region’s ecosystem, economy and cultural resources. Work performed resulting from this RFP will be a main component of this objective. The RPB has also established “Effective Decision Making” and “Compatibility Among Past, Current and Future Ocean Uses” as its two other overarching goals. The baseline assessment will also support objectives within these goals, RPB decisions over the next several years, and development of the regional ocean plan.

- 2. Background:** Executive Order 13547 “Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes” provides for the establishment of Regional Planning Bodies to develop coastal and marine spatial plans that are consistent with and build on existing federal and state decision making processes. The Northeast RPB, composed of federal, state, tribal, and New England Fishery Management Council representatives, first convened in November 2012 in Portland, Maine. In its subsequent public meetings and dialogue, the RPB has completed the following main initial tasks as a foundation for its ongoing planning efforts:
 - a. Development and approval of draft goals, objectives, and actions** following extensive public input, which were discussed and adopted at the RPB’s meeting in January 2014;
 - b. Continued development of the Northeast Ocean Data Portal** (www.northeastoceandata.org), an on-line source of spatial data related to human activities and natural resources in the Northeast US; and
 - c. Continued implementation of a work plan** that includes necessary tasks to meet the region’s objectives for ocean planning. This RFP relates directly to this work plan.

The work of the RPB is being directly supported by grants for regional ocean planning obtained by the Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC). NROC, established by New England's Governors in 2005, is a state-federal partnership formed to identify solutions to New England's most pressing ocean and coastal issues that require a regional response. NROC member states are Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont. Federal agencies, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of the Interior (U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Homeland Security (U.S. Coast Guard), and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, have been full members of NROC since its inception. Individuals representing the New England states and federal agencies are in many cases members of both NROC and the RPB. The RPB also includes representatives from each of the federally-recognized tribes in New England, as well as a representative of the New England Fishery Management Council, and ex-officio members representing Canada and the State of New York.

The general geographic focus of the RPB's work is on estuarine and marine waters from Long Island Sound north around the waters south of Rhode Island and Massachusetts and through the Gulf of Maine. In general, this focus includes state and federal waters and while the extent of federal waters is 200 miles offshore, the general planning focus tends to be within the first 30 miles approximately. The geographic extent for particular elements of the baseline assessment may need to be adjusted as dictated by the specific topic and/or availability of information.

Stakeholders participating in this regional ocean planning effort come from each of the New England states and the state of New York. Collectively, they reflect the wide variety of people who use, recreate on, or are concerned with the productivity and health of New England's ocean waters and resources. This group includes people from various industries, such as shipping, energy, fishing, boating, and aquaculture, recreational interests, and environmental advocacy groups, as well as academic and government scientists and others.

For more information on the RPB and other activities underway in support of regional ocean planning, see on-line information available at www.neoceanplanning.org.

- 3. Objective:** The primary objective of this RFP is to develop a written baseline assessment of the region's ecosystem, economy, and cultural resources (including resources of tribal and historic significance) for use in ocean planning. This includes the integration of existing data and information from previous and ongoing ocean planning projects, including the data portal. Additionally, as part of this work, certain topics will require research and analysis: first, an assessment of the region's economy; and second, a compilation of topic-specific projections (i.e., projections and trends of particular types of human activities in the ocean), strategic plans, compilations of best management and construction practices, and other forward-looking documents originating from available

industry and government sources. These particular portions of the baseline assessment are discussed in the task descriptions below.

Potential respondents should review the “Framework for Ocean Planning in the Northeast United States” (<http://neoceanplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/NE-Regional-Ocean-Planning-Framework-February-2014.pdf>) to understand ongoing and planned activities, their expected outcomes and timing, and for guidance on the development of the baseline assessment. While ocean planning staff will be primarily responsible for ensuring coordination among ocean planning activities, the contractor hired through this RFP will be expected to interact with other contractors including those supporting public engagement and RPB meetings, developing the Northeast Ocean Data Portal, developing products characterizing marine life distribution and abundance, and those engaging different economic sectors (commercial fishing, recreational fishing, maritime commerce, energy, etc.) to map and characterize their activity. Respondents are encouraged to review the results of ocean planning engagement and mapping to date, including reports on www.neoceanplanning.org and data/maps on www.northeastoceandata.org.

The baseline assessment should include the following general subjects. NROC welcomes suggestions on how to organize the baseline assessment, for example by applying an ecosystem services-type of a framework and/or other ways of maximizing the utility of this baseline assessment. Responses to this RFP should include a description of the proposed approach and its rationale. These topics are provided for illustrative purposes only, and are not intended to serve as chapter headings (there are sub-topics within each of these that will need to be expanded upon):

- a. Northeast regional geography
- b. Oceanography and water column, including water quality
- c. Geology and seabed
- d. Habitat and marine life (integrating information from the contractor developing products characterizing specific marine life populations)
- e. Archaeological and cultural resources
- f. Human uses of the ocean and the regional economy (integrating the economic assessment in task 2 below), including: shipping and maritime commerce, commercial and recreational fishing, energy and associated infrastructure, tourism, military, aquaculture, and other forms of recreation (boating, etc.)
- g. Climate change and changing conditions
- h. A chapter summarizing future considerations for planning, including existing plans and strategic plans, industry projections and trends, and requirements and best practices for siting (from Task 3 below)

The final baseline assessment product will be a mixture of text, maps, figures, images and summary data integrated into a single public document with an executive summary that can stand-alone. This final document will be a camera-ready product, and responses to this RFP should describe

approaches to final document preparation (i.e., including editorial review, graphics preparation and incorporation, and layout). Where possible and available, the preference is for the baseline assessment to use illustrations (maps, tables, charts, etc.) of data and information, recognizing that some specific topics may not have suitable information available. Individual products from Tasks 2 and 3 should stand alone as well. Previous ocean planning efforts in Massachusetts and Rhode Island included similar documentation, and may serve as examples for respondents to consider. The contractor will also be expected to attend relevant ocean planning events and activities, as developing these products will require in-depth understanding of ongoing activities and expected outcomes in order to integrate information into a single document.

Many topics will vary geographically and temporally. While this is a regional assessment, some topics might best be summarized at a sub-regional level that is appropriate for each ecological or economic component. Respondents are encouraged to describe their approaches to combining topic-specific information which may come from various sources, occur at various geographic and/or temporal scales, or have other related concerns. There is not likely a single approach that will work for all topics, so responses should provide topic-specific detail where appropriate. Since this work will require familiarity with a broad range of topics, team structure, expertise, and project management will be important considerations in evaluating proposals and would preferably include:

- A single, senior level point of contact responsible for project and budget management, who has demonstrated experience managing diverse teams, tracking progress, and ensuring deadlines are met. This individual would preferably have experience managing teams in the development of complex assessments, a general understanding of the data and information sources for each of the topics above, and experience integrating economic and ecological information into policy and planning decisions.
- Individuals with experience developing written baseline assessments, existing conditions reports, or similar documents that integrate existing data and information for planning purposes
- Specific expertise necessary to conduct the assessment of the region's maritime economy as described in Task 2 below
- Specific subject area expertise, as necessary, to guide or write other chapters of the baseline assessment using existing sources
- Expertise using ArcGIS and graphic design software to develop and include maps and other graphics from the data portal and other sources
- Editorial, graphical, and layout expertise

Respondents should propose an approach to developing the baseline assessment described in this RFP which implements Actions 1-5 and 1-6 of the Framework and other tasks under the "Healthy Ocean and Coastal Ecosystems" Goal. Respondents should also propose an approach to compiling all existing information from government, industry and non-governmental organization sources that include projections or in some manner guide future ocean activity, including strategic planning

documents, compilations of best management and construction practices, and economic, technological, and modeled forecasts of potential changes in environmental conditions. This last task will result in an understanding of current plans and requirements and expected trends, to help understand the context of the baseline assessment and to support other regional ocean planning discussions (e.g., related to other Northeast ocean planning goals).

NROC suggests the following tasks to complete the baseline assessment, but also welcomes creativity in responses to this RFP. Proposals should provide detailed information about how each task will be conducted, documented, summarized, and managed. Proposals should also describe the experience of the team, particularly related to the expertise requested above. Lastly, proposals should include a detailed budget and a timeline for each task that provides an itemized explanation of the estimated work hours needed to complete the task, the basis for and assumptions underlying each estimate, and the justification for proposing such a timeline (see Part Two of this RFP below for further information required in proposals).

Task 1. Complete a baseline assessment outline

Develop and maintain an outline of the baseline assessment, including primary topics/chapters, sub-topics for each chapter, and a listing of potential figures/tables and data sources. Respondents should include an initial outline in their proposal, starting with the outline above, that includes details about the potential approach for integrating information and recognizes the variability of source information for each subject. Potential sub-topics should be provided for each chapter.

Ultimately, a final outline will be developed in consultation with ocean planning staff after execution of a contract. Final deliverables for this task include draft and final outlines and summaries of discussions with staff and others informing the development of final products.

Suggested Timeline: An outline of the chapters/topics and sub-topics with initial anticipated figures, tables, and data sources will be completed in the first month of the contract. The contractor will maintain and continually update the outline with potential data and information sources throughout the project.

Task 2. Conduct an analysis of the regional maritime economy

Develop an assessment of the regional maritime economy, including the following two specific analyses:

- a. *Assess the coastal and marine economy at the regional, state and coastal county level*
Develop an economic assessment of the regional coastal and marine economy using standard economic indicators, such as employment, establishments, wages, gross domestic product, and other indicators of economic activity and output. Each indicator should be assessed for as many coastal and marine related industries within each economic sector as possible at the state and coastal county level (using the North American Industry

Classification System – NAICS), with particular attention to maritime commerce, commercial and recreational fishing, boating, aquaculture, energy, and other activities with the greatest links to maritime goods and services. The contractor can expect to build on a regional assessment conducted by the ENOW program at NOAA for the following six sectors: Living Resources, Marine Construction, Marine Transportation, Offshore Mineral Extraction, Ship and Boat Building, and Tourism and Recreation. Potential respondents should review products from ENOW at <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/data/enow>.

The contractor should also build on these products by incorporating additional data sources that capture economic activity and the specific characteristics of the following components of the marine economy that are already being assessed and engaged in ocean planning: commercial fishing, aquaculture, recreational fishing, shipping and marine transportation, recreational boating, energy, other marine infrastructure (including submarine cables), wildlife viewing and non-motorized recreation, and scientific research. For example, an analysis of shipping and marine transportation might include import/export tonnage and value. An analysis of commercial fishing industry might include a summary of volume and value of landings by fishery. Where data are available, temporal trends in such analyses should be included.

Proposals should provide a detailed description of the products that will be developed at the regional, state and coastal county level, including the economic indicators that will be reported, the sectors and industries that will be assessed, and the specific characteristics of each of the above segments of the marine economy that will be further described. This should include the differences in the assessment at each geographic scale and the justification for these variations.

Respondents should propose an approach that builds on existing sources and assessments. Proposals should include potential data sources that will be used to complete this assessment. The following listing of existing sources is provided to assist with proposal development, but should not be considered complete.

- Economic: National Ocean Watch (ENOW)
- National Ocean Economics Program/Center for the Blue Economy
- Atlantic Regional Wind Energy Development: Recreation and Tourism Economic Baseline Development (BOEM)
- An Assessment of the Coastal and Marine Economies of Massachusetts (UMASS Donohue Institute)
- State of the Gulf of Maine reports and Ecosystem Indicators Partnership fact sheets prepared by the Gulf of Maine Council
- White Paper overviews of the maritime commerce, aquaculture, and energy sectors in the Northeastern United States (NROC)

- National Marine Fishery Service and State Fishery statistics and reports on commercial fishing Industry
- National Marine Fishery Service and State Fishery statistics and reports on saltwater recreational fishing licenses and the economic contribution of saltwater recreational fishing
- The Economics of the Recreational For-hire Fishing Industry in the Northeast United States (NMFS)
- The 2012 Northeast Recreational Boater Survey (SeaPlan)
- Assessments of port tonnage, value and economic impacts from the US Army Corps of Engineers and state and local port authorities
- Other recent economic assessments conducted by government, academia and industry for the maritime segments listed above

b. Summarize nonmarket valuation studies

Develop a summary of nonmarket valuation studies for the range of ecosystem goods and services in the region. The final product would not be a quantitative nonmarket valuation study for the Northeast, but instead a summary of existing studies from within or outside the region that provide a description and potential range of nonmarket values for key ecosystem services. The final product should include a range of values associated with each ecosystem service, a bibliography of source data, an assessment of the transferability of those studies to the Northeast, and recommendations for further assessments related to ocean planning. Respondents should propose an approach to this task that includes familiarity with source data, concepts of benefit transfer and nonmarket valuation, and considers the following sources of data and methods:

- National Ocean Economics Program
- Marine Ecosystem Service Partnership
- Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem Service Valuation
- Specific valuation studies conducted in the Northeast

The contractor should expect a review of interim and final products with ocean planning staff, the RPB, and staff from RPB agencies. Final deliverables for this task include an outline and work plan for each sub-task, summaries of all meetings with staff and the RPB, and draft and final stand-alone products for each sub-task.

Suggested Timeline: An initial outline and work plan for each sub-task should be developed in the first three months of the project, including potential approach, indicators, and data sources. Draft products should be developed within the first eight months of the project. Final products should be delivered within the ninth and tenth month of the project.

Task 3. Compile existing information about potential future considerations specific to ocean uses

Develop and implement a framework for compiling and summarizing existing information that may influence future conditions and planning considerations for each the following ocean uses and activities: commercial fishing, recreational fishing, recreational boating, aquaculture, shipping and navigation (maritime commerce and the cruise ship industry), energy, marine infrastructure (including cables), tourism, military, and scientific research. For each ocean use, summarize the following three components:

A. Economic projections and trends related to environmental, technological, economic or regulatory factors

- Previous ocean planning work in New England included a project attempting to assess the potential changes to the current “footprint” of existing human activities in marine waters in New England, specifically related to maritime commerce, energy and associated infrastructure, and aquaculture (see www.neoceanplanning.org/ for summaries of this project). In addition to this type of expert opinion-solicitation, for many activities in the ocean there are periodic papers in the literature (and gray literature) that attempt to assess how technological or other factors may affect future uses or alter the pattern.
- Examples include literature assessing potential implications of various national and international activities (such as the widening of the Panama Canal) on maritime commerce; analyses related to offshore wind energy development produced by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

B. Federal and state planning or strategic planning initiatives

- Other ongoing governmental initiatives that are planning for specific human activities need to be understood and their potential ramifications for regional ocean planning explored. Both Federal and State planning initiatives, often topic-specific but also including more comprehensive ocean management efforts undertaken by individual states such as Rhode Island and Massachusetts, should be included in this task.
- Examples include existing State level efforts at comprehensive ocean planning and also issue-specific work such as statewide port planning efforts, renewable energy goals, and management actions related to fisheries management. Examples at a Federal level include various activities and projects underway at the Bureau of Offshore Energy Management, fisheries management, and others.

C. Best management and construction practices

- For many specific types of ocean development activities, government and industry-developed best management practices exist or are in development. This particular component of work will focus on obtaining and summarizing those best management and construction practices that are in use and publically available.

- Examples include standards for Federal permitting issued by the Corps of Engineers, standards for offshore energy products produced by BOEM, standards for marine construction activities in certain states, and analogous practices developed by particular industries (e.g., for submarine cables).
- Note that this component of Task 3 is not necessarily intended to be completely linked to the baseline assessment, but is intended to collect related information that may inform the baseline assessment and/or other aspects of regional ocean planning (e.g., to help further understand use compatibility considerations, such as discussed in the related goal of the Framework).

The contractor should expect to develop interim and final products, with ocean planning staff and RPB member review of draft products. Final deliverables for this task include an outline and work plan, summaries of all meetings with staff and the RPB, and draft and final stand-alone products, including a list of references.

Suggested Timeline: An initial outline and work plan should be developed in the first three months of the project, including potential approach and sources. Draft products should be developed within the first eight months of the project. Final products should be delivered in the within the ninth and tenth month of the project.

Task 4. Compile a draft written baseline assessment

Develop a written baseline assessment that compiles all available ecological, economic, and cultural information about the coastal and marine Northeastern United States into a single product using the outline developed in Task 1. The baseline assessment should include figures, maps, and other graphics to describe existing conditions and trends. Where possible, the report should directly use or reference maps and other graphics available through the Northeast Ocean Data Portal. However, it is expected that new layouts for use of these graphics in print or online documents will be required. There may also be a need to develop new maps and graphics using existing and available data through the Northeast Ocean Data Portal and other sources.

Tasks 2 and 3 will result in stand-alone products and will provide the basis for specific chapters of the baseline assessment. NROC's contractor characterizing marine mammal, sea turtle, bird, and fish populations will provide components of the marine life and habitat chapter; similarly, a contractor will be working on characterizing recreational activities and will contribute to that section. Other chapters of the baseline assessment will be developed by integrating existing data and information that is available through routine research of the scientific and grey literature. Based on the timeline developed as part of Task 1, the contractor should opportunistically develop chapters of the baseline assessment throughout the course of the project, recognizing that some information and data will be more readily available and easily compiled. The contractor will be

expected to attend and present at meetings and workshops where the baseline assessment will be reviewed by the RPB and the public.

Final deliverables for this task include iterative drafts, a summary of comments on each draft, a final draft for public and RPB review, a presentation for use in meetings and workshops, and separate files for each graphic and or map in the baseline assessment. Separate files for each graphic and map should be provided both as a PDF and in their native format, allowing for the reproduction of the graphic and the use of the data in additional analysis. This may include Microsoft Excel tables or other spreadsheet software, ESRI geodatabases and map projects or other GIS software, and Adobe Creative Suite files or other graphic design software.

Suggested Timeline: Iterations of baseline assessment for chapters not relying on the marine life or recreational characterizations or the results of tasks 2 and 3 should be developed in the first eight months of the project. A final draft of the baseline assessment should be developed by the eleventh month of the project.

Task 5. Develop a final baseline assessment

Develop a final baseline assessment for regional ocean planning that incorporates comments and reviews of the draft and integrates newly available information (if any) resulting from other ocean planning projects and activities. The anticipation is that the draft of the baseline assessment developed as part of Task 4 will be available for public comment.

Final deliverables for this task include a final baseline assessment, a summary of all comments and revisions, and a final presentation for use in meetings and workshops. As above, separate files for each graphic and or map in the baseline assessment should be provide and be included as both PDF and in their native format, including all input data and information.

Suggested Timeline: A final baseline assessment and related deliverables should be provided in the sixteenth month of the project.

Task 6. Attend ocean planning events and activities

The contractor will be expected to attend all public and RPB meetings, select internal working group meetings, and other relevant ocean planning activities in order to understand the planning context and the products that will be available for integration into the baseline assessment. As stated above, the contractor will be expected to present draft and final products at select meetings. The contractor may also be required to provide status updates, including presentations of the baseline assessment outline and examples from iterative drafts, at additional public and internal meetings.

Suggested Timeline: The contractor will be expected to attend ocean planning meetings and activities throughout the course of the sixteen month project.

4. **Project Funding:** The overall budget for this project is a maximum of \$200,000. NROC anticipates a single award to a contract team providing all the experience and products requested in this RFP. NROC reserves the right to make more than one award to accomplish components of this work if necessary. NROC also reserves the right to re-allocate the entire budget or portions of this funding if a satisfactory candidate(s) for all of these services are not determined or the services are no longer needed.
5. **Deliverables:** Proposals should include a detailed work plan, including a description of proposed approaches and methods to be used to complete all tasks and develop products. Deliverables for each task are outlined above. Proposals should include additional details as necessary that are specific to the proposed approach and development of products for each task.
6. **Project schedule:** NROC expects that work on this project will start immediately following completion of a contract, on or before June 1, 2014 and will extend through September of 2015. A suggested timeline that is coordinated with other ocean planning milestones has been provided for each task above. NROC welcomes creativity in responses and therefore proposals should include a detailed timeline that considers the general guidance provided in this RFP, the specific approaches that are proposed, and justification for any variation in the overall timeline or within specific tasks.

Part 2: Proposal Preparation and Submittal

The following sections describe the procedures and content for submitting proposals.

1. **Pre-submittal conference call.** NROC will host a pre-submission conference call to allow potential respondents to ask clarifying questions on Thursday, April 17 at 3:00 pm. Instructions to participate in this conference call will be sent to all people who express their interest via email at least 24 hours before the conference call.
2. **RFP clarification.** Questions and requests for clarifications regarding this solicitation should be sent to the email contact below. The deadline for submitting such an email is Thursday, April 17 at 5:00 pm. Responses will be posted to the Northeast Ocean Planning web-site on Friday, April 18. Questions should be sent to:

Proposal@northeastoceancouncil.org

John Weber, Ocean Planning Director
Northeast Regional Ocean Council

3. **Submittal requirements.** For review purposes, NROC requires responses to this RFP to be delivered electronically, via email as an Adobe™ .pdf file, to Proposal@northeastoceancouncil.org. Proposals must be received by email no later than 5:00 pm on May 2, and shall plainly identify the subject of the proposal and the name, phone, email, and address of the bidder.

It is the bidder's responsibility to ensure that NROC receives the proposals prior to the specified closing date. Proposals received after the specified closing date will not be considered.

4. Content requirements. Proposals must be clear, succinct and shall not exceed 15 pages. Section dividers, cover letter, title page, and table of contents do not count in the overall page count of the proposal. Exclusions to the page limitation may include relevant work samples and/or resumes, as described below, provided in appendices. Each bidder is required to describe how they will provide the deliverables described above as part of their proposal. Information provided will be evaluated and scored by NROC; missing elements will adversely impact a proposal's overall score.

a. General requirements:

- i. Single-spaced pages when printed on 8.5" x 11" paper with 1-inch margins (top, bottom, left and right) with font no smaller than 11 point.
- ii. The total number of pages must not exceed 10 pages (not including appendices).
- iii. The proposal must be submitted as an Adobe™ .pdf document with all pages numbered and clearly identifying the name of the bidder.

b. Proposal organization and content:

- i. Cover letter. Provide a cover letter indicating your organization's commitment to implementing this initiative (e.g. senior management approval, etc.). Also, include appropriate point of contact information, including the person's name, title, address, phone number and email address.
- ii. Table of contents. Identify page numbers of main sections, including any appendices.
- iii. Executive summary. Summarize the proposal's approach to completing the deliverables required by this RFP and highlight any competitive advantages or unique approaches of your proposal, cost-effectiveness measures, and particular skills offered by the project team.
- iv. Work plan. Include a concise, yet detailed work plan for completing the deliverables described in this RFP and to ensure appropriate management of the scope, schedule, budget and overall quality of work. Include a time line showing implementation, starting from contract execution, including all major tasks and their sequence, inter-relationships and dependencies between tasks and key milestones and deliverables.
- v. Detailed budget. Provide an itemized budget to produce the deliverables described in this RFP. Include all costs related to personnel (identify estimated hours and rate), administrative overhead, travel, materials, equipment, and any other anticipated expenditures required to complete the work described in this RFP. In this budget description, describe leveraging of existing work, funding, or other in-kind services. Note

that because of the requirements of the source of funding for this project, indirect costs are encouraged to be limited to a maximum of 12.5% of allowable direct costs. For purposes of this RFP, indirect costs are defined as “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.” For purposes of this RFP, direct costs include all of the expenses that are required for, and can be tracked directly to, this project, including but not limited to personnel, consultants/contractors, or other direct expenses such as travel, supplies, and software.

- vi. Team structure and qualifications. Please provide the following:
- Project team organization chart, including a brief description of the role of each team member.
 - Summary of the experience, skill or unique attribute of each team member. Including a maximum two-page resume for each team member is allowable in a “resumes” appendix.
 - Summary of related, successful projects that illustrate the capabilities and qualifications of the project team. In addition, providing a maximum two-page description of up to two recently-completed projects is allowable in a “related experience” appendix. Include references that NROC may contact for these projects.

Proposals must identify any tasks which will be assigned to subcontractors and associated budget details include in part v above. The successful bidder will be prohibited from subcontracting, assigning, or transferring any listed responsibilities without prior review and consent of NROC.

Part 3: Evaluation of Proposals

This section summarizes the general process and criteria NROC intends to use to evaluate proposals.

1. **General review process.** The NROC Ocean Planning Director will collect and assemble all proposals received by the RFP deadline. An evaluation team comprised of RPB members will be convened to evaluate and score all proposals, using the criteria below. Upon completion of the scoring process, the evaluation team will recommend to the NROC Executive Committee and RPB co-leads that the highest scoring bidder be awarded the project.
2. **Criteria.** NROC will use score all proposals according to the following criteria:
 - a. *Approach (25%).* Bidders will be evaluated on the detail, clarity, and soundness of their approach to this project, including strategies for overcoming any potential obstacles, creativity, and cost effectiveness. Creativity in approach to accomplishing the tasks in this RFP is urged.

- b. *Qualifications and experience of project team (25%)*. NROC will evaluate a project team members' combination of education, training, and record of achievement and experience related to the tasks described in this RFP. Specific attention will also be focused on an assessment of a project team's direct experience with potential subject matter and with experts in pertinent fields.
- c. *Cost Effectiveness (20%)*. Bidders will be evaluated on the budget submitted with their responses to this RFP. Any leveraging of existing work, funding, or other in-kind services, will be a significant portion of this evaluation.
- d. *Project Management (30%)*. Bidders will be evaluated on their ability to complete the project within the schedule provided, track record of project management, and proposed project management strategies for this project. NROC will in particular look to the approach described to achieve Task 6, given NROC's interest in a centralized approach to managing this work, not by a broad, multiple-lead team approach.

Part 4. General Provisions

The following general provisions apply to this RFP and subsequent actions taken by NROC.

1. Response to this RFP does not commit NROC to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred during the preparation of the proposal.
2. NROC reserves the right to reject any or all of the proposals for completing this work. NROC also reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP at any time.
3. NROC reserves the right to eliminate the need for the selected bidders to complete one or more tasks, pending the outcome of preceding related tasks or issues, and/or the availability of project partners to complete that task.
4. NROC reserves the right to modify the final scope of work and deliverables prior to finalizing a contractual agreement with the selected bidder(s).
5. Subsequent procurement, if any, will be in accordance with an executed contract. This RFP and any response may, at NROC's discretion, become part of the executed contract.
6. All entities participating in this RFP process will be notified of acceptance or rejection. NROC reserves the right not to disclose reasons for the rejection. NROC is not obligated to accept the proposal with the lowest cost.
7. No publicity or media release about this RFP, response to this RFP, discussion of any kind related to this RFP, or the award of any contract related to the bid document, may be released without NROC's prior approval.
8. All materials submitted by bidders become the property of NROC. NROC will retain copies of all proposals for historical records and documentation.
9. Each Bidder agrees to comply with all federal regulations including those pertaining to non-discrimination in hiring and employment practices.
10. NROC owns all rights to deliverables and, within the bounds of acceptable practice as determined by limitations placed upon data used in this project by data providers, intends that products resulting from this project will be made publically available.