



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Fisheries Innovation Fund: Contract to Measure Fisherman Well-being and Dissemination of Innovative Fisheries Solutions in Alaska

APRIL 14, 2023

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks a qualified offeror to assist in the implementation of a single survey to measure the individual well-being of fishermen and the dissemination and adoption of innovative solutions developed through the Fisheries Innovation Fund (FIF) in Alaska. The Contract Period of Performance is estimated to be approximately 12-15 months, starting in July 2023.

BACKGROUND

NFWF developed the Fisheries Innovation Fund (FIF) in 2010 through a partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Walton Family Foundation, and other partners. The FIF aims to foster innovation and support effective participation of fishermen and fishing communities in the implementation of sustainable fisheries in the United States. By developing and implementing innovative solutions to common fisheries challenges, FIF hopes to help support environmental and economic performance and contribute to improved individual well-being of fishermen and fishing communities.

Since its inception, the FIF has awarded grants to over 200 projects that have advanced innovations in capacity building, bycatch reduction, seafood marketing, electronic monitoring and reporting, and recreational fisheries. Attracting highly innovative solutions to many of the most pressing issues in fisheries management today, the FIF has successfully catalyzed over \$94.6 million in investments to fisheries throughout the United States¹. Fisheries in Alaska are the focus of this survey and represent 39 projects and \$33.9 million of this effort. The fishermen who comprise the survey population do not receive grants directly from NFWF. FIF grant recipients are typically non-profits, fishing organizations, or management entities that work directly with the fishermen and the fishing communities to implement projects.

An external evaluation conducted for NFWF in 2014 concluded that the FIF has been highly successful in identifying and supporting projects that are consistent with the revitalization of U.S. fisheries. The report recommended that the FIF begin complementing its emphasis on innovation with a focus on the dissemination and uptake of grantee innovations. Starting in 2015, NFWF began focusing on projects that implement proven innovations at larger scales within a subset of priority fisheries, including the New England groundfish fishery, the Gulf of Mexico reef fish fishery, the Pacific groundfish fishery, and Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries. In 2021, NFWF contracted for a survey of fishermen to assess fishermen well-being and the dissemination and uptake of these innovations in the Northeast groundfish fishery and the Gulf of Mexico reef fish fishery. This Request for Proposals is for the implementation of the survey in Alaska groundfish fisheries.

¹ Estimates include grantee matching funds and grants funded through the Fisheries Innovation Fund and the Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Grant Program, which was launched in 2015 in partnership with NOAA as a separate funding opportunity under the Fisheries Innovation Fund.

Using the results of the survey, NFWF would like to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent have FIF innovations been disseminated to and implemented by fishermen in the areas where FIF grants have been awarded?
 - a. Dissemination metrics: proportion of fishermen and/or permit holders aware of an innovation, proportion persuaded by its value, and proportion interested in adopting/rejecting an innovation
 - b. Implementation metrics: proportion of fishermen and/or permit holders who implemented an innovation, proportion that continued to utilize innovation, and rate of adoption
2. What are fishermen's perceptions of subjective, relational, and material well-being in NFWF's priority fisheries?
 - a. Well-being metrics: subjective well-being (measures of quality of life and job satisfaction), relational well-being (measures an individual's satisfaction with fisheries management), and material well-being (measures subjective household income)

As part of the 2021 contract mentioned above, NFWF and its contractor developed, tested, and implemented a survey of commercial and recreational for-hire fishermen in the Northeast groundfish fishery and Gulf of Mexico reef fish fishery². NFWF is seeking a qualified offeror to replicate the survey among fishermen in Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries. The survey's target population includes permit holders primarily in the federal Gulf of Alaska (GOA) halibut and groundfish fisheries, but the NFWF has also worked with members of the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and GOA pollock fishery managed under the American Fisheries Act. The total survey population includes an estimated 1,000 commercial vessels with relevant Federal Fisheries Permits in the GOA and BSAI, 25 Community Quota Entities, six Central Gulf Rockfish Program Cooperatives, and approximately 500 recreational charter halibut permit holders³. The fisheries operate throughout Alaska, with the majority of relevant permit holders operating in the GOA from Southeast Alaska to the Alaska Peninsula⁴.

SCOPE OF WORK

The survey seeks to gather responses from representative samples of relevant commercial and recreational for-hire permit holders, vessel owners, and/or fishermen within the Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries. The selected offeror will work closely with NFWF staff to refine the previously implemented survey (as needed), finalize the sampling frame for the survey population, disseminate the survey, and analyze and report on survey results by October 2024.

² RIT International (2021) Fisheries Innovation Fund: Baseline Survey Estimates of Fishermen Well-Being and Diffusion of Innovations in the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery and the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery. Final report prepared for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Available online: <https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/fisheries-innovation-fund-wellbeing-innovation-survey-final-report.pdf>.

³ Permit information for commercial, recreation for-hire, Community Quota Entities, Rockfish Program Cooperatives, Federal Processor Permits, registered buyers, and others is available online:

[https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/commercial-fishing/permits-and-licenses-issued-alaska#charter-\(sport\)-halibut](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/commercial-fishing/permits-and-licenses-issued-alaska#charter-(sport)-halibut)

⁴ International Pacific Halibut Commission regulatory areas: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/sustainable-fisheries/alaska-fisheries-figures-maps-boundaries-regulatory-areas-and-zones>



The schedule below includes important milestones for implementing the survey successfully. Survey deployment strategies must consider that the target population spends a significant amount of time at-sea and may live in relatively remote areas of Alaska. The optimal window for conducting the survey is December 2023 through February 2024. Therefore, to obtain an adequate response rate the selected offeror must adhere to this timeframe. Key milestones for the project reflect this survey window and include the following:

July 2023 – Kick-off meeting to initiate contract and scope of work

Early November 2023 – Finalize survey questionnaire and dissemination strategy

December 2023 to February 2024 – Deploy survey

September 2024 – Final report and presentation to NFWF

Task 1: Become familiar with the Fisheries Innovation Fund and the innovation and well-being survey.

Description: The innovation and well-being survey has already been drafted, tested, and implemented among fishermen in the Northeast groundfish and Gulf of Mexico reef fish fisheries⁵. NFWF staff will work with the selected offeror to provide background information on the FIF and the previously implemented survey instrument and results.

Task 2: Refine the innovation and well-being survey for Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries.

Description: Under this task, the survey should be tailored to Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries in preparation for deployment. NFWF does not anticipate significant changes to the existing survey, but some refinements will be needed to customize the survey for the target fisheries and/or add or remove questions as appropriate. In addition, the survey will need regionally specific pre-testing.

NFWF recognizes the challenges associated with surveying fishermen. Publicly available contact information for fishermen and permit holders is limited to mailing addresses associated with fishing businesses.⁶ NFWF does not have access to email addresses. A push-to-web survey was used in the surveys of the Northeast groundfish and Gulf of Mexico reef fish fisheries and is anticipated for the current survey. While budget details cannot be disclosed, it is unlikely that NFWF will have sufficient funds to implement an in-person or dockside survey.

Deliverables: Final survey questionnaire for Alaska ready for deployment.

Schedule: Complete by Early November 2023 to allow sufficient time to plan for survey deployment from December 2023 through February 2024.

Task 3: Plan for survey distribution within the Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries.

⁵ RIT International (2021) Fisheries Innovation Fund: Baseline Survey Estimates of Fishermen Well-Being and Diffusion of Innovations in the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery and the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery. Final report prepared for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Available online: <https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/fisheries-innovation-fund-wellbeing-innovation-survey-final-report.pdf>.

⁶ Permit information for commercial, recreation for-hire, Community Quota Entities, Rockfish Program Cooperatives, Federal Processor Permits, registered buyers, and others is available online: [https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/commercial-fishing/permits-and-licenses-issued-alaska#charter-\(sport\)-halibut](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/commercial-fishing/permits-and-licenses-issued-alaska#charter-(sport)-halibut)



Description: Concurrent with finalizing the survey questionnaire under Task 2, the selected offeror will begin preparations to deploy the survey to the target population. This will include finalizing the sample frame, reviewing, cleaning, and finalizing mailing/contact lists, outreach efforts, printing and other preparations needed to ensure timely survey deployment and sufficient response rates.

Deliverables: Final contact lists and outreach materials.

Schedule: Concurrent with Task 2; complete by Early November 2023.

Task 4: Deploy innovation and well-being survey to fishermen within the Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries, compile results, and conduct follow-up to ensure sufficient response rates.

Description: The selected offeror will disseminate the innovation and well-being survey to relevant fishermen in the Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries. The survey should be distributed to as many of the approximately 1,500 permit holders, vessel owners, and/or fishermen as possible to get a representative sample of responses within the fishery. NFWF anticipates a high level of follow-up with the survey population will be needed to ensure sufficient response rates and recommends the survey remain open for three months to accommodate year-round fishing schedules.

Schedule: The optimal survey window is December 2023 through February 2024.

Task 5: Analyze and summarize survey results from the Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries to address the two research questions below.

Description: The selected offeror will provide summary statistics and analysis of the survey results to answer the following research questions.

1. To what extent have FIF innovations been disseminated to and implemented by fishermen in the areas where FIF grants have been awarded?
2. What are fishermen's perceptions of subjective, relational, and material well-being in NFWF's priority fisheries?

Deliverables: Written summary of preliminary survey results (including underlying data) from the Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries that incorporates review and feedback from NFWF staff.

Schedule: Complete by approximately June 30, 2024.

Task 6: Summarize results and prepare final report and presentation about fishermen's well-being and the dissemination and adoption of innovations in the Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries.

Description: Incorporating feedback provided by NFWF under Task 5, the selected offeror will prepare a final report of survey results for the Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries. At least two rounds of review and revisions are expected. In addition, the selected offeror should provide a presentation of the final survey results to NFWF staff prior to the finalization of the report.

Deliverables: Draft and final written reports; presentation to NFWF.

Schedule: Prepare draft report and provide presentation of results to NFWF by July 31, 2024; incorporating revisions, submit final report no later than September 30, 2024.

CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS



Proposals will be evaluated and scored on the following criteria. Offerors should organize their Statement based on these sections:

- 1. Understanding of the Scope of Work.** The Scope of Work must demonstrate an understanding of the goals and the activities involved. This section should include a description of how you will communicate with NFWF and program stakeholders and report on progress, results, and deliverables. Weight: 5%
- 2. Technical Approach.** The technical approach for conducting the Scope of Work should clearly describe the proposed methods in detail for each of tasks outlined. The section must demonstrate that those methods are robust and appropriate for conducting the Scope of Work and address any areas of complexity or uncertainty associated with answering the research questions. Weight: 20%
- 3. Qualifications of Proposed Personnel.** The section should clearly describe which tasks each member of the team will conduct and how their training and experience provide the requisite experience to do so successfully. Personnel must have expertise in survey design and deployment specifically to recreational and commercial fishermen, as well as expertise in statistical analysis of survey data and reporting survey results. Weight: 25%
- 4. Offeror's Past Performance.** The proposal should include information on the primary investigator(s)'s past performance implementing surveys to fishermen. If sub-contractors are to be used, information should be provided that demonstrates their past performance as well. Describe how that past performance is applicable to this Scope of Work. Weight: 25%
- 5. Budget.** The proposed budget should itemize work in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the entire funding request. You must use the Contractor Budget Template provided ([available here](#)). You may add columns to the template for additional tasks if needed but should not make any other changes. Weight: 25%

ELIGIBLE OFFERORS & CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Eligible applicants include institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, and local, state, and Indian tribal governments. Small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises are strongly encouraged to apply.

By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, the offeror warrants and represents that it does not currently have any apparent or actual conflict of interest, as described herein. In the event an offeror currently has, will have during the life of the contemplated contract, or becomes aware of an apparent or actual conflict of interest, in the event an award is made, the offeror must notify NFWF in writing in the proposal, or in subsequent correspondence (if the issue becomes known after the submission of the proposal) of such apparent or actual conflicts of interest, including organizational conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the offeror, the offeror's employees, or the offeror's sub-contractors in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests, or otherwise. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with



knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the offeror, the offeror's employees, or the offeror's future sub-contractors in the matter. Upon receipt of such a notice, the NFWF Contracting Officer will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any possible actions to be taken by the offeror to reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies NFWF may result in the proposal not being selected for award.

By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, the Offeror warrants and represents that it is eligible for award of a Contract resulting from this solicitation and that it is not subject to any of the below circumstances:

- Has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an Contract with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or
- Was convicted (or had an officer or agent of such corporation acting on behalf of the corporation convicted) of a felony criminal violation under any Federal or State law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or
- Is listed on the General Services Administration's, government-wide System for Award Management Exclusions (SAM Exclusions), in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 C.F.R Part 180 that implement E.O.s 12549 (3 C.F.R., 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 C.F.R., 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension," or intends to enter into any subaward, contract or other Contract using funds provided by NFWF with any party listed on the SAM Exclusions in accordance with Executive Orders 12549 and 12689. The SAM Exclusions instructions can be found here: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be submitted under the same email at the same time, in three distinctly labeled and separate documents: 1) Technical Proposal, 2) Budget, and 3) Evidence of Financial Stability. Interested parties should submit proposals electronically to NFWF (Gray Redding at gray.redding@nfwf.org) using the requirements below:

1. Technical Proposal

- Format: Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF with a font size no smaller than 11 point (except figures and tables). The Narrative section of the proposal is the only section with a page limit (no more than 5 pages).
- Contact information: Primary contact person, company name, address, phone, email, website, UEI number, and EIN/Taxpayer ID#.
- Narrative: Concise (5-page limit) description of the work plan and a summary of the applicant's expertise and experience. List recent (last 2-5 years) accomplishments and previous services related to the technical expertise offered.



- **Biographies:** Resumes and/or Vitae of key staff and their role in the proposed work area.
 - **References:** List two clients who have received services from the applicant that is similar in nature to the proposed work, including a survey of fishermen; provide names, phone numbers, and email address.
- 2. Budget:** The budget proposal must be submitted using the Contractor Budget Template ([available here](#)).
- 3. Evidence of Financial Stability:** The applicant shall provide with the RFP response, proof of financial stability in the form of financial statements, credit ratings, a line of credit, or other financial arrangements sufficient to demonstrate the applicant’s capability to meet the requirements of this RFP.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

A panel of NFWF staff will review the full proposals. Offerors may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of the award. Only one award will be made for this project. If multiple institutions are involved, they should be handled through sub-awards and sub-contracts.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

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| April 20, 2023 | Deadline for questions about the solicitation to NFWF. Offerors should submit questions regarding this solicitation via email to Gray Redding (gray.redding@nfwf.org). NFWF will post all the questions and responses so that all offerors have access to them at the same time. To provide equitable responses, all questions must be received by NFWF no later than 5:00 PM EDT on April 20, 2023. |
| April 24, 2023 | NFWF response to questions about the solicitation. NFWF will post the questions submitted regarding the solicitation and responses on the NFWF website at https://www.nfwf.org/programs/fisheries-innovation-fund?activeTab=tab-2 . |
| May 5, 2023 | Deadline for receipt by NFWF of proposals. Proposals must be received electronically as an email attachment to Gray Redding (gray.redding@nfwf.org) by 5:00 PM EDT on May 5, 2023. Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF. |
| June 2023 | Contract award to selected Offeror |
| September 2023 | Deliverables Due |