



Fisheries Innovation Fund 2018 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Pre Proposal Due Date: **Monday, May 14, 2018 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, July 12, 2018 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) will award grants to foster innovation and support effective participation of fishermen and fishing communities in the implementation of sustainable fisheries in the U.S. We anticipate awarding up to \$950,000 through this solicitation. This solicitation also makes available funding provided through Community Service funds (arising from a federal environmental prosecution for benefits to marine wildlife and habitats).

The Fisheries Innovation Fund was created through a partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The program seeks to support fishermen and communities as they work to meet the sustainable fisheries goals of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006, including provisions to help: 1) rebuild overfished stocks; 2) sustain fishermen, communities, and vibrant working waterfronts; 3) promote safety, fishery conservation and management; and 4) promote community and economic benefits.

Successful proposals will develop and carry out innovative approaches that:

1. Promote full utilization of Annual Catch Limits and minimize bycatch of overfished species and/or endangered, threatened, and candidate species;
2. Develop and implement market, research, training, or strategic planning measures to build capacity and improve sustainability of U.S. fishing businesses and communities;
3. Support improvements to recreational fisheries conservation and management;
4. Support implementation of marine aquaculture.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The Fisheries Innovation Fund is a national program and will consider proposals that develop or implement innovations in all U.S. fisheries, both commercial and recreational. Unless otherwise noted, priority will be given to projects in one of four focal fisheries: New England groundfish fishery, West Coast groundfish fishery, the Gulf of Mexico reef fish fishery, and the Gulf of Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries. Fisheries operating outside of the U.S. are ineligible for funding under this opportunity.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Proposals submitted to the Fisheries Innovation Fund should address one or more of the program priorities listed below. All proposals should outline the conservation benefits of the project, which will likely refer to the sustainable use and/or recovery of the target species. Monitoring change over time will be a key aspect of project proposals.

When addressing these priorities, projects should seek to either:

- 1) *Develop or pilot innovative ideas* – Competitive proposals will develop, test, and/or pilot innovative solutions to known fisheries challenges. Innovations from all U.S. fisheries will be considered.
- 2) *Implement proven innovations at-scale* - Competitive implementation proposals will scale-up proven innovations that are positioned to impact a significant portion of the fleet and/or multiple fishing communities. When applicable, such proposals will focus on the diffusion, adoption, and application of innovative strategies.

1. *Bycatch Reduction and Capacity Building*: Priority for Bycatch Reduction and Capacity Building will be given to projects that address at least one of the strategies described below. Priority will be given to implementation-scale projects within one or more of the four focal fisheries, but innovations from all U.S. fisheries will be considered. Exceptions apply (see bullet d).

- a. Develop bycatch reduction initiatives that enhance opportunities for fishermen to fully utilize annual catch limits. This may include innovative, collaborative approaches such as bycatch hotspot mapping or risk pooling, which allow fishermen to continue to harvest while reducing impacts on protected, overfished, and non-target species and their habitats.

Proposals to develop and implement strategies to reduce bycatch through gear innovations should consider applying to the NOAA [Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program](#).

- b. Build the capacity of individual fishermen and/or sectors to improve the sustainability, economic viability, and efficiency of fishing businesses and communities including developing community sustainability plans and/or business plans that support financial stability of fishermen and/or communities. Projects might also include implementing innovations to help retain access to fisheries resources (e.g. permit or quota banks) or promoting inter-generational fishery access and entry level access into the fishery.
- c. Facilitate market innovations, such as differentiated product and forward contracting marketplaces. This may include projects that diversify revenue, create value-added products, or develop new markets for underutilized species.
- d. There may be additional funding available for implementing bycatch reduction strategies for marine mammals and/or sea turtles in the following regions: the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and other important habitat for sea turtles and marine mammals in coastal waters along the Southern District of Florida, the Gulf of Maine in areas that are identified as priority for northern right whales, and on the West Coast, Alaska, and Hawaii in fisheries that interact with sea turtles and marine mammals. To be eligible, projects under this



category must demonstrate a reduction in bycatch within the period of performance. Projects that are developing a prototype and/or indirectly contributing to reductions in bycatch are not eligible for these funds. Eligible projects will promote voluntary use of bycatch reduction devices in active fisheries resulting in reduced bycatch. Federal or non-federal matching funds are encouraged for projects in this sub-category but not required (please contact Mike Laguna, michael.lagua@nfwf.org, if you propose to apply without a 1:1 match).

2. Recreational Fisheries: Priority for Recreational Fisheries will be given to projects that address at least one of the following strategies. Priority will be given to implementation-scale projects within one or more of the four focal fisheries but innovations from all U.S. fisheries will be considered.

- a. Improve monitoring and assessment strategies that are consistent with the priorities and complement research projects of the [NOAA Fisheries Marine Recreational Information Program](#) including, but not limited to, innovative dockside surveying methods and other mechanisms to help improve the quality and efficiency of gathering data.
- b. Address current needs identified by the recreational sector through the [NOAA Fisheries National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy Implementation Plan](#), including, but not limited to: supporting ecosystem conservation and enhancement, promoting public access to quality recreational fishing opportunities, and advancing innovative solutions to evolving science, management, and environmental challenges. The [Regional Recreational Fisheries Implementation Plans](#) may also be utilized in identifying specific regional needs.
 - i. Reduce discard mortality and improve handling practices. This may include expanding the adoption of best management practices and other technologies that reduce discard mortality or evaluation of discard mortality rates in recreational fisheries.
 - ii. Explore alternative approaches to recreational fisheries management that address data gaps and support angler engagement and capacity building. This may include increasing angler awareness and understanding of fisheries science and management practices, or developing new strategies to address the needs of recreational anglers in sustainable fishery management.

3. Marine Aquaculture: Priority for Marine Aquaculture will be given to projects that address at least one of the strategies described below for offshore aquaculture in one of the following geographies: 1) New England, 2) Southern California or 3) the Gulf of Mexico. Offshore aquaculture is typically defined as open ocean locations or locations in federal waters. Also, priority will be given to marine aquaculture of mollusks or seaweed in 4) Alaska (termed “mariculture”).

- a. Projects that engage communities, management agencies, ocean users and others in the development and implementation of risk management strategies and plans that will help to identify, minimize and mitigate risk factors associated with marine aquaculture (e.g., transfer of disease, water quality, fish escapes, genetic effects on wild populations, impacts on other marine wildlife, etc.) and protect the ecological quality of the seabed.



- b. Projects that engage communities, management agencies, ocean users and others in development of plans to inform the appropriate siting of marine aquaculture operations, avoiding environmental risks and reducing the potential for ocean use conflicts. This could include projects that draw from existing environmental and ocean use data and may contribute new data products or analyses that facilitate the implementation of environmentally sustainable aquaculture.

Electronic Monitoring and Reporting:

Historically, the Fisheries Innovation Fund focused on a wide range of projects that tested and piloted different aspects of electronic monitoring and reporting in fisheries across the U.S. Projects focusing on electronic monitoring and reporting should apply under the separate Electronic Monitoring and Reporting (EMR) Grant Program, which will prioritize funding for implementation of regional-scale electronic monitoring and reporting strategies. A separate EMR Grant Program RFP is expected to be released in 2018. Questions should be directed to the Program Manager, Mike Laguna (Michael.Lagua@nfwf.org).

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, a list of metrics for the *Fisheries Innovation Fund* is available in Easygrants. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). If you do not believe an applicable metric has been provided, please contact Mike Laguna (Michael.Lagua@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Example Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
<i>Example project activities are given for demonstration purposes only and are not meant to be inclusive of all activities that could be associated with a given metric.</i>	<i>Metrics available in the Easygrant full proposal application.</i>	<i>Please review the additional guidance carefully to determine if a given metric is appropriate for your project.</i>
Maximize fishing opportunities	Fishing Season - # of days	Number of days open to fishing within the regular season.
Implement market or operational innovations to increase profit of fishing or aquaculture businesses	Change in Economic Benefits - % profitability	Percent of revenue represented by profit (profit/total revenue).
Generate outreach or educational materials	Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance - # people reached	Number of people reached by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities.



Provide incentives and/or information to support reductions in bycatch or post-release mortality (or other behavioral changes)	Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance - # people with changed behavior	Number of people demonstrating a minimum threshold of behavior change. This metric should only be chosen if the project has clear methods to define and measure behavior change, which should be described in the “Notes” section.
Promote job creation via the development of new fishing or aquaculture businesses and/or support for new entrants	Economic Benefits - # of jobs created	Number of jobs created as a direct result of the project.
Build institutional capacity to support full-time employment	Building Institutional Capacity - # of FTE with sufficient training	Number of staff or full-time equivalents with sufficient training and skills to engage in conservation activities. Examples of institutions may include fishing associations, permit banks, community-based fishing businesses, or non-profits. Use the notes section to identify all impacted institution and types of skills gained through the training efforts.
Participants agree to, and comply with, an incentive agreement (e.g. fishing association, permit bank, bycatch avoidance network, cooperative, etc.)	Participants complying with their incentive agreement - # participants in compliance	Number of participants complying with an incentive agreement developed through the project. Specify and describe the type of agreement that participants will be complying with in the “Notes” section.
Implement innovative tool to assist participants in decision-making (e.g. tools to support traceability, bycatch reduction, quota management, environmental risk management in aquaculture, information sharing, business planning, marketing, etc.)	Tool development for decision-making - # tools developed	Number of tools developed or implemented through the project. Specify the type of tool(s) in the “Notes” section.
Develop community sustainability plan or aquaculture management plan	Management or Governance Planning - # plans developed	Number of plans developed with input from multiple stakeholders. Examples of types of plans may include community sustainability plans, business plans, aquaculture management plan etc. Specify the type of plan in the “Notes” section.
Implement bycatch avoidance and/or reduction strategy	Reduction in bycatch - # of individuals saved	Number of tons of fish saved through bycatch reduction strategies

Implement program to provide accurate monitoring data for catch reporting, supply chain traceability, bycatch reporting, etc.	Monitoring - # monitoring programs	Number of monitoring programs to be implemented or established
Implement program to provide accurate monitoring data for catch reporting, supply chain traceability, bycatch reporting, etc.	Monitoring - # vessels in monitoring program	Number of vessels directly engaged in monitoring program(s)
Implement strategies to effectively trace seafood through the supply chain	Monitoring – tons traced through supply chain	Number of tons of seafood traced through the supply chain
Develop innovations to increase harvest efficiency within fishing businesses	Fishing effort – Catch per unit effort	Catch per unit of fishing effort

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Indian tribes, educational institutions, businesses, international organizations, and unincorporated individuals.
- Ineligible applicants include U.S. Federal government agencies, including Regional Fisheries Management Councils

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The Fisheries Innovation Fund will award up to \$950,000 in grants for the 2018 funding cycle. The majority of awards under this program will fall in the range of \$50,000 to \$100,000, although upper or lower limits to award size are not specified. Matching contributions from non-U.S. Federal sources (both cash and in-kind) must equal or exceed a 1:1 ratio (100% of the award amount) unless otherwise noted. Grant proposals with higher match rates may be more competitive. Applicants will be prompted to include information on other sources of funding for the project in the application section entitled “Matching Contributions.” Project periods must start within six months of the RFP release date and cannot exceed two years.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness, and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

Program Goals and Priorities – Project contributes to the Fund’s overall conservation goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities outlined in the Request for Proposals.

Technical Merit – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical, and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, design, and implementation to ensure activities are technically-sound and feasible.

Transferability – Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

Communication – Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.

Funding Need – Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested, and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding.

Conservation Plan and Context – The project advances an existing conservation plan or strategy.

Monitoring – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Long-term Sustainability – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This should include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

Past Success – Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

Partnership – An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that leverages additional funds and will sustain it after the life of the grant. Identify proposed partners, if known (including potential or contemplated subawards to third party subrecipients of the applicant), the roles they will play in implementing the project, and how this project will build new or enhance existing partnerships. (Note: a project partner is any local community, non-profit organization, tribe, and/or local, state, and federal

government agency that contributes to the project in a substantial way and is closely involved in the completion of the project.)

Match – Non-federal matching contributions (both cash and in-kind) must equal or exceed a rate of 1:1 (100% of the award amount). Grant proposals with higher match rates may be more competitive.

OTHER

Budget – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF’s [Budget Instructions](#) cost categories. Federally-funded projects must be in compliance with [OMB Uniform Guidance](#) as applicable.

Matching Contributions – Matching Contributions consist of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the Project during the Period of Performance. Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive during application review.

Procurement – If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, an award by NFWF to the applicant does not constitute NFWF’s express written authorization for the applicant to procure such specific services noncompetitively. When procuring goods and services, NFWF recipients must follow documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable laws and regulations.

Publicity and Acknowledgement of Support – Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF’s financial support for the grant in press releases, publications and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by NFWF to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs depicting the project.

Receiving Award Funds – Award payments are primarily reimbursable. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF. A request of an advance of funds must be due to an imminent need of expenditure and must detail how the funds will be used and provide justification and a timeline for expected disbursement of these funds.

Compliance Requirements – Projects selected may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and National Historic Preservation Act. As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with additional Federal, state or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances.

Permits – Successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or has received all necessary permits and clearances to comply with any Federal, state or local requirements. Where projects involve work in the waters of the United States, NFWF strongly encourages applicants to conduct a permit pre-application meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers prior to submitting their proposal. In some cases, if a permit pre-

application meeting has not been completed, NFWF may require successful applicants to complete such a meeting prior to grant award.

Federal Funding – The availability of federal funds estimated in this solicitation is contingent upon the federal appropriations process. Funding decisions will be made based on level of funding and timing of when it is received by NFWF.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the Program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information ([Fisheries Innovation Fund](#)). Please [click here](#) to register for the applicant webinar.

✓ Pre-Proposal Webinar	April 20, 2018, 3:00 PM Eastern Time
✓ Pre-Proposal Due Date	May 14, 2018 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
✓ Invitations for Full Proposals Sent	June 2018
✓ Full Proposal Due Date	July 12, 2018, 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
✓ Review Period	July - November, 2018
✓ Awards Announced	November 2018

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Easygrants system.

1. Go to easygrants.nfwf.org to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.
2. Once on your homepage, click the “Apply for Funding” button and select this RFP’s “Funding Opportunity” from the list of options.
3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

A PDF version of this RFP can be downloaded [here](#).

A *Tip Sheet* is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded [here](#).

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:



Mike Laguna
Manager, Fisheries Conservation
Michael.Lagua@nfwf.org
(202) 595-2438

Haven Whipple
Coordinator, Marine and Coastal Conservation
Haven.Whipple@nfwf.org
(202) 595-2469

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:

Easygrants Helpdesk

Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org

Voicemail: 202-595-2497

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.

Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.