



Request for Proposals

RFP #: 2023-02

Date of Issue: April 21, 2023

Joint Innovation Projects

The Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) is soliciting proposals from individuals, companies, or organizations, as part of a new program designed to accelerate innovation in the Alaska mariculture industry by funding applied research and development projects which address barriers to growth in Alaska’s mariculture industry. Through this competitive RFP process, AFDF will select, and fund Joint Innovation Projects proposed by businesses (hatcheries/nurseries, aquatic farmers, processors, technology companies), or other eligible organizations. Findings and data from these projects will be compiled into reports and distributed to the public, ensuring benefits are available to all current or future industry participants, and the public in general.

Background

This new program, Joint Innovation Projects, is a part of the Research and Development component of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC), a coalition funded by a U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) grant (project number 07-79-07901). A Governance Body will guide the work and equity metrics of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster. AFDF is a part of the coalition, one of the subaward recipients, and the AFDF executive director serves on the Governance Body. As part of its subaward, AFDF will oversee a portion of the Research and Development component, and in particular, the Joint Innovation Projects. The Research and Development component is one of seven components, which have been purposely designed to be complementary in order to break down barriers to growth, and break out of the “chicken or egg” cycle of industry development. More information on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster is available at alaskamariculturecluster.org, including the [Overarching Narrative](#) which explains how the seven components work together to grow the mariculture industry in an equitable and environmentally responsible manner, and the [Research and Development Component](#).

About AFDF

Since 1978, the AFDF has broadly represented the Alaska seafood industry (harvesters, processors and support service businesses) in the areas of research and development. AFDF has previous experience with projects similar to the Joint Innovation Projects related to Alaska’s

seafood industry. Since 2014, AFDF has spearheaded the Alaska Mariculture Initiative, an effort to expedite the development of growing shellfish and seaweed in Alaska. As a result of those efforts, Governor Walker created the Mariculture Task Force (MTF) by Administrative Order from 2016-2021, during which time the AFDF Executive Director served as either Chair or Vice-Chair. The MTF was designed to sunset and in its place has been created the Alaska Mariculture Alliance (AMA); the AFDF Executive Director serves on its Board of Directors.

Eligible Entities

The following entities are eligible to submit proposals for funding under the Joint Innovation Projects:

- Companies doing work in Alaska, with an Alaska team member
- Alaska companies (hatcheries, nurseries, aquatic farmers, primary processors, or secondary processors)
- Alaska non-profits
- Alaska tribes
- Alaska Native Corporations
- Alaska communities

Eligible Project Categories

The following project categories were chosen to address identified barriers to growth. Project proposals must identify one of the following eligible categories for which to apply:

- Innovations in processing (oysters or seaweed)
Examples:
 - Primary stabilization of seaweed (freezing, drying, fermentation, meal)
 - Secondary processing
 - Freezing oysters
 - Other product development
- Innovations in bull kelp farming
Examples:
 - Farm design
 - Cultivation techniques
 - Seeding density
 - High current sites
- Innovations in mooring system technology, design and/or deployment
- Boosting oyster growth at nurseries or farms
- Shellfish enhancement

Tribal Entity Engagement

Proposals must demonstrate engagement with a local or regional tribal entity near the project location throughout the project timeline. A tribal entity includes tribes, Alaska Native corporations (ANC), or Community Development Quota (CDQ) groups.

Deliverables

The following deliverables will be a requirement of all funded Joint Innovation Projects:

- Signed contract between AFDF and the project lead.
- Semi-annual reports to AFDF detailing progress, engagement with tribal entity, problems and how they are being addressed
- Summary of the project to be presented and shared at the annual Alaska Mariculture Conference. The project lead will collaborate with AFDF and other funded project leads.
- A copy of all data produced in conducting the Joint Innovation Project. Data should be provided in commonly-used formats that allow other researchers to re-analyze the data.
- A final report submitted to AFDF detailing the project outcomes including successes, challenges, and lessons learned, which will be posted online for the public.

Timeline and Funding Available

Funding is secured for the Joint Innovation Projects program through the EDA BBBRC and matching funds. Selected proposals will be funded for a timeline of up to 18-month projects. Start dates must be between July 1 to December 31, 2023. The number of projects funded and award amount will depend on the quantity and quality of proposals received. Proposals may only request funding up to \$100,000. Matching funds are not required, but will score extra points.

Restrictions on Funds

Funding is not eligible to be used for infrastructure, including real property or improvements to real property. Funding cannot be used by a for-profit enterprise to purchase equipment. "Equipment" means purchases of single units with a total purchase price, delivered, in excess of \$5,000.00. Only EDA-eligible entities (non-profits, tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, Universities, or communities) are eligible to use funds to purchase equipment and retain ownership of the equipment. If a private company proposes to purchase equipment as a part of a project, it may be possible for AFDF, or another EDA-eligible entity, to purchase and retain ownership of the equipment for future lease and use by the public. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Insurance Requirements

Funding of projects will be contingent upon providing proof of required insurance policies for project activities, which may include: 1) commercial general liability insurance, with property damage; 2) hull and machinery insurance with limits sufficient to cover any vessels used, 3) protection and indemnity insurance, with limits of not less than one million dollars per event, and/or 4) workers compensation insurance.

Proposal Content Requirements

The proposal must consist of the following (maximum 5 pages):

1. Project Title
2. Entity Name & Contact Information
3. Identification of Project Category
4. Entity Eligibility
5. Project Summary (1 paragraph)

6. Problem Statement (1 sentence)
7. Project Objectives, Tasks, and Measures of success
8. Project Engagement with local or regional tribal entity
9. Project Timeline (including tasks)
10. Project Budget (including any matching funds or in-kind contributions)
11. Qualifications of Project Team

Scoring Criteria

Scoring of each proposal against the criteria listed below will be conducted by a committee with recommendations and final approval made in cooperation with the lead entity, Southeast Conference. Criteria and maximum potential scores for selecting proposals are as follows:

- 10 points: Completion of proposal content requirements
- 15 points: Demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the barrier to growth that the project plans to address
- 10 points: Feasibility of the proposed joint innovation project
- 10 points: Potential impact of the project on removing barriers to mariculture industry growth
- 10 points: Other resources committed by the project team (i.e. matching funds, existing equipment, staff time, etc.)
- 15 points: Past experience on relevant and/or similar projects
- 10 points: Demonstration of capacity to complete all of the deliverables within the required timeline
- 10 points: Costs are reasonable and fall within available/projected funding levels
- 10 points: Equity metrics - If members of the proposal team are Alaska Native, or if the project location is in a rural coastal Alaska community, additional points will be awarded.

Right to Refusal: AFDF reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received.

Due Date: Proposals must be submitted via email no later than **5:00pm AST,**

Wednesday, May 31, 2023 to Hannah Wilson at hwilson@afdf.org as either Adobe PDF or Microsoft Word documents. For questions, please call or email Hannah Wilson at 907-276-7315, hwilson@afdf.org, or Julie Decker at jdecker@afdf.org.