



Request for Proposals

RFP #: 2024-04

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De-Risking Investments in Aquatic Farming

The Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) is soliciting proposals from individuals, companies, or organizations, as part of a program designed to “de-risk” investments in the Alaska mariculture industry by funding a modeling and/or data collection study to support the mariculture industry in selecting appropriate sites and right-sizing equipment. Through this competitive RFP process, AFDF will select, and fund proposal(s) related to ocean modeling, and data collection proposed by businesses, universities, independent researchers, 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

With a vast coastline, Alaska has a huge range of environments to choose from in siting mariculture farms. Understanding which sites are best suited for farming, and how to be best equipped for a unique site addresses the risk for mariculturists in selecting and farming a site. The De-Risking Aquatic Farming project 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 guides the work and equity metrics of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster. AFDF is a part of the coalition and one of the subaward recipients. As part of its subaward, AFDF oversees a portion of the Research and Development component, and in particular, the De-Risking Aquatic Farming project. 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 De-Risking Aquatic Farming 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 former 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) of which AFDF is a member.

Eligible Entities

The following entities are eligible to submit proposals for funding under the De-Risking Aquatic Farming program:

- For-profit companies and corporations
- Non-profits
- Alaska tribes
- Alaska Native Corporations
- Universities

Eligible Project Categories

AFDF seeks projects that address one or both of the following categories:

1. **Ocean Modeling** of waves, tides, currents, and other salient oceanographic features to inform site suitability for mariculture activity. This data will also inform matching equipment to individual mariculture sites for relevant aspects of farming including but not limited to depth, tides, currents, and wind.
2. **Collect and analyze environmental data** that may influence the success of a farm site.

The technical environmental data may include but is not limited to:

- *Evaluate environmental factors in farm productivity*
- *Environmental parameters such as temperature, salinity, pH, turbidity, nutrients, etc.*
- *Water column changes inside and outside mariculture farm sites*
- *Planktonic communities and fouling organisms*

Deliverables

All projects will be required to have a robust data sharing plan that will allow for easy access by the general public to all project data and models beyond the project timeline.

Additional anticipated project deliverables should be outlined in the proposal and will be finalized once a Notice of Intent to Award has been received by successful applicants. AFDF

reserves the right to suggest alternative deliverables prior to granting the award to guarantee that AMC's desired outcomes will be successfully achieved.

Timeline and Funding Available

Funding is secured for the De-Risking Aquatic Farming program through the EDA BBBRC and matching funds. Start dates of selected proposals must be no later than November 1, 2024, and projects must be complete by August 31, 2026. Projects may be funded up to \$1,200,000. AFDF reserves the right to request a reduced budget for proposals prior to providing a Notice of Intent to Award letter and welcomes proposals below the funding limit.

Restrictions on Funds

Funding is not eligible to be used for infrastructure, including construction, real property or improvements to real property. Funding cannot be used to purchase equipment. "Equipment" means purchases of single units with a total purchase price, delivered, in excess of \$5,000.00. If a proposal is contingent upon purchasing equipment, please contact Hannah Wilson (hwilson@afdf.org) in advance of submission. Exceptions to the no equipment rule may be considered 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.

Alaska Business License Requirements

Per AS 43.70.020(a) a business license is required for the privilege of engaging in a business in the State of Alaska. Per AS 43.70.110(1) "Business" means a for-profit or non-profit entity engaging or offering to engage in a trade, a service, a profession, or an activity with the goal of receiving a financial benefit in exchange for the provision of services, or goods, or other property. If selected for funding under this RFP, an Alaska Business License will be required. See <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/BusinessLicensing/BusinessLicensingFAQs.aspx>

Proposal Content Requirements

The proposal must consist of the following (maximum 10 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. Data Sharing Plan
9. Project Timeline (including tasks)

10. Project Budget (including any matching funds or in-kind contributions)
DOWNLOAD REQUIRED BUDGET TEMPLATE [HERE](#)
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:

- 20 points: Feasibility of the proposed project and demonstration of capacity to complete all of the deliverables within the required timeline
- 30 points: Potential impact of the project on de-risking investments in aquatic farm infrastructure in Alaska
- 10 points: Other resources committed by the project team (i.e. matching funds, existing equipment, staff time, etc.)
- 20 points: Past experience on relevant and/or similar projects
- 10 points: Costs are reasonable and fall within available/projected funding levels
- 10 points: Robustness of data sharing plan

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 **August 16th, 2024** to Hannah Wilson at hwilson@afdf.org as either Adobe PDF or Microsoft Word documents.

- Proposals received after the deadline may be considered but only if they can be accommodated by AFDF's review process. Additional information provided after the deadline may also be considered but only if such information can be accommodated by the review process.

For questions, please call or email Hannah Wilson at 907-276-7315, hwilson@afdf.org.