



ALASKA FISHERIES

Development Foundation, Inc.

Request for Proposals

RFP #: 2025-02

Date of Issue: October 10, 2025

Joint Innovation Projects - Round III

Innovations in Product Development

The Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) is soliciting proposals from individuals, companies, or organizations, as part of a 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 product development focused 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

The Joint Innovations Project (JIP) effort is currently soliciting proposals for a scaled down third cohort of projects. The first cohort of 15 projects began work in August 2023 ([summary of these projects is available here](#)). The second cohort of 14 projects began work in July 2024 ([a summary of these projects is available here](#)). Review all 29 JIP unique applied research and development projects on the [Alaska Mariculture Cluster website here](#).

The JIP effort 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 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, [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. The [Alaska Mariculture Alliance](#) (AMA) was created as a result of this initiative, of which AFDF is a member.

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 nonprofits
- Alaska tribes
- Alaska Native Corporations
- Alaska communities
- Universities

Eligible Project Categories

The following project category was chosen to address identified barriers to growth. Project proposals must fit within the eligible category to apply:

- **Innovations in product development (shellfish or seaweed)**
 - Examples (including but not limited to):
 - Development and testing of new products using Alaska seaweed or shellfish
 - Activities necessary to bring a new product to market, such as: market testing, refinement of processing methods, business planning, and related commercialization efforts.
 - Scaling or improving production methods for existing seaweed or shellfish products

Tribal Entity Engagement

Proposals are encouraged to demonstrate engagement with a local or regional tribal entity near the project location throughout the project timeline.

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, challenges and how they are being addressed.
- Semi-annual presentation to JIP advisory panel and cohort PIs on project progress

- Summary of the project to be presented (poster or talk) 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 which will be posted online for the public. Reports should include:
 - Overall project successes, challenges, and lessons learned.

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 9-month projects, with full completion by September 30, 2026. The number of projects funded and award amounts will depend on the quantity and quality of proposals received (estimated 3-5 projects with available funds). Proposals can request funding up to \$50,000 per project. 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 an 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 Timeline (including tasks)

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

- 25 points: Feasibility of the proposed joint innovation project and demonstration of capacity to complete all of the deliverables within the required timeline
- 30 points: Potential impact of the project on removing barriers to the mariculture industry growth
- 15 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

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

Due Date: To be sure your project will be considered for funding, proposals must be submitted via email no later than **December 2nd, 2025**, to Alex Huller at ahuller@afdf.org as either Adobe PDF or Microsoft Word documents.

- If funding remains, proposals will be considered on a rolling basis after the batch of proposals submitted by the above date are scored and awarded.
- 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 Alex Huller at 513-317-7947 or ahuller@afdf.org