



**GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION  
MARINE AQUACULTURE PILOT PROJECTS GRANT OPPORTUNITY  
FY2018 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) is requesting proposals to develop potential marine aquaculture projects in the United States (U.S.) Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) region. The Commission is making \$450,000 available for the funding period of April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019. The Commission plans to award several projects ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000 each, but will give consideration to projects that can justify a greater need. Any investigator seeking support for this period must submit, as a single file, an electronic proposal by e-mail no later than **5:00 p.m. CST on Thursday, February 1, 2018**. Please see the *Proposal Guidelines* section for proposal and submission instructions.

**Background**

More than ninety percent of seafood consumed in the U.S. is imported, more than half of imported seafood is from overseas aquaculture, and despite possessing the largest exclusive economic zone in the world, the United States ranks only fifteenth in aquaculture job production.

To address the major lost opportunity for job creation in coastal communities and to encourage the development of a domestic seafood supply, we are seeking proposals to conduct regional pilot programs for partnerships between the seafood industry and community partners that can develop, validate and deploy economically and environmentally sustainable aquatic farming techniques and regional business practices to grow U.S. domestic seafood production. To maximize the impact of these pilot grants, we are giving priority consideration to promising but less commercially developed technologies, such as those targeting shellfish, seaweed, and other relative newcomers to the domestic aquaculture industry.

**Proposal**

The goals for the requested proposals should address at least one or more of the priorities listed below (not in any order) to develop aquaculture ventures in estuarine or marine waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

Priority 1. Develop commercial techniques that focus on advancing commercial aquaculture in the Gulf of Mexico. Projects may include:

- Hatchery work in support of shellfish, seaweed, or finfish aquaculture operations in state or federal waters.
- Academic and private collaboration to provide hatchery space for commercial rearing and production for aquaculture operations in state or federal waters.
- Development of gear and systems appropriate for marine aquaculture production in offshore waters.

Priority 2. Create pilot projects which demonstrate the feasibility of permitting an offshore aquaculture operation in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

### **Proposal Guidelines**

Proposals should clearly outline the project objectives, methodologies, research outputs, qualifications of the investigators who would perform the work, where the work would be performed, and a detailed budget. It is critically important to clearly and explicitly articulate how the proposed work addresses the research priorities identified in this document. Proposal should also indicate how the results of the proposed work will be communicated to interested parties and the public. Proposals should not exceed 3 pages in length (including references) and should follow the instructions for preparing proposals for Commission awards (*Attachment A*).

Applicants should be willing to work closely with the Commission staff during the execution and progress of the projects. Funds for this project are provided by NOAA Fisheries. Projects accepted for funding must comply with all federal government audit principles/procedures and the Department of Commerce's Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions ([DOC Terms and Conditions](#)).

### **Duration, Eligibility, and Funding**

This grant program is intended for development of commercial marine aquaculture demonstrations, start-ups, and production. The Commission will fund proposals on a competitive basis. Proposals from foreign entities are not eligible. Proposals involving multiple investigators are welcome and collaboration is encouraged. Any U.S. federal government agencies or staff, including Regional Fishery Management Council staff, are not eligible to receive funding through this solicitation. These funds can be used to fund a project in its entirety, or in combination with existing funds or additional grant awards. The majority of the proposed work should be conducted in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico region. Proposed activities should be completed in the one-year funding period of April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019.

### **Submittal Instructions**

Investigators must submit by e-mail an electronic copy of the proposal. Electronic files must be a single file in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format and must be sent via e-mail to Steve VanderKooy (svanderkooy@gsmfc.org) for receipt no later than **5:00 p.m. CST on Thursday, February 1, 2018**. "Gulf Aquaculture Pilot Projects" must be specified in the subject line. Proposals not received by the deadline will be returned without review. Proposals failing to comply with content and format requirements will not be accepted.

### **Proposal Evaluation**

All proposals meeting the specified requirements will be evaluated through a technical review of independent experts. Proposals will be ranked based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

*Program Goals and Priorities* - The project contributes to the overall conservation goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico region.

*Technical Merit* - The project is technically sound and feasible and there is 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. Permit

needs are considered and the ability to secure proper permits to conduct the proposed work is compatible with project timelines.

*Budget Justification* - Costs are allowable, reasonable, and budgeted in accordance with the Commission's project-specific cost categories (*Appendix A*) and are in compliance with *OMB Uniform Guidance* as applicable.

*Stakeholder Collaboration* – Projects including multiple aquaculture-based stakeholders (e.g. commercial fishermen, seafood industry, and/or academia) is strongly encouraged. If applicable, proposals should describe which stakeholders will be involved and what their roles will be.

*Matching Funds* – Are not required but special consideration will be given to projects that involve additional outside funding and/or in-kind contributions.

Decisions will be disseminated to P.I.s by March 1, 2017 and research is expected to begin April 1, 2018.

**For More Information**

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**Attachment A****Instructions for Preparing Proposals for  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Awards**

Proposal should be a scientific or technical action plan of activities to be accomplished. Please use the following format when preparing your proposal but restrict your proposal to a maximum of 3 pages in length (including references). Font size should be no smaller than 12. Proposals must include:

1. **Applicant name:** Identify the name of the applicant organization.
2. **Title:** A short descriptive name of the proposal.
3. **RFP Priority:** Identify the priority or priorities that this proposal addresses and how the intended goals of the grant program will be met.
4. **Objective:** State concisely the purpose of the proposal in quantified terms where possible.
5. **Job Title:** A proposal subdivided into two or more jobs must identify each job separately.
6. **Job Objectives:** Provide an objective(s) for each job element, as appropriate.
7. **Job Procedures:** A detailed and concise set of procedures to answer who, what, how, when, and where. Proposals must clearly identify:
  - a. Applicants' activities and deliverables,
  - b. Activities and deliverables of other agencies involved in study, and
  - c. Statement of Authority/Confidentiality, if applicable.
8. **Location:** Describe the location of work.
9. **List of Key Personnel:** List all project personnel and their responsibilities. If personnel are working on the project but are not identified in the project-specific budget, they must be noted as working at no-cost to the project.
10. **Milestone Schedule:** Make a cross-referencing table summarizing, by job, activities that are to be attained each month, including reports.
11. **Project-Specific Budget:** Include a cost estimate breakdown for each cost category covered during the budget period identified. Detailed budget information is required for the following elements:
  - a. Personnel - For each employee, provide the time estimated to be charged to the project; the rate/year, month, day, or hour; and the resulting calculated cost assessed to the project.
  - b. Fringe Benefits - For each employee, identify all fringe-related costs and the rate applied. If the fringe rate is greater than 25%, a copy of the Fringe Rate Agreement must be included.

- c. Travel - Information must be provided on the purpose of travel, destination, daily cost charges, number of days, and number and identity of travelers. All out-of-state and foreign travel must be justified in the proposal.
- d. Equipment (items having a unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more) - Describe how equipment will be used on the project and why it is needed. Identify make and model numbers and unit cost. In addition, a lease versus purchase analysis is necessary for each piece of equipment. Computers and computer-related hardware are often less than \$5,000; due to long-term operational life-span, the need to purchase these items must be clearly explained.
- e. Supplies and Materials - List general categories of supplies and materials, including unit costs and quantities. The terms “miscellaneous” and “etc.” are not allowed.
- f. Contractual/Consulting Services - List each contractor/consultant, describe specific duties to be performed, and how the cost for the service was derived. In addition, a statement as to whether or not the contract or consulting service was competitively selected is necessary. If the service was not competitively selected, a sole source justification is required.
- g. Other Costs - List and describe other costs that are not assignable to the other direct cost categories. Indicate how these costs were derived.
- h. Indirect Costs - If indirect costs are charged, identify the rate used in the calculations, and **include a copy of the current negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with your proposal.**