

# Request for Research Proposals

*Issued Wednesday, September 10, 2008*

**Letter of Intent Deadline:  
4:00 PM Wednesday, October 15, 2008**

**Full Proposal Submission Deadline:  
4:00 PM Thursday, October 30, 2008**

*An informational meeting about this RFP will be held in Hazard Room A/B in the Coastal Institute on the Narragansett Bay Campus of the University of Rhode Island on Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September from 5:30PM to 7:30PM.*

## **Southern New England Collaborative Research Initiative of the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation**

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## **Introduction**

Resource management decisions need to be based on good information. In the southern New England region there is an urgent need to collect and utilize accurate, timely, and credible data to develop solutions to common fishery management problems. Central to this effort is the need to find management strategies that protect and rebuild the resource while minimizing the impacts on the fishing community. At the same time, there is the need to develop and institute selective harvesting approaches, explore new ways to better utilize and market the resources available, promote efficient business practices and uncover new opportunities, and evolve fishery management practices to incorporate a solid understanding of ecosystem dynamics, including species' interactions and changing environmental factors.

There is also the need to establish a standard research approach that builds collaborative and cooperative working relationships between members of the fishing community and scientists, and fosters ongoing communication. A successful, results driven fisheries research program needs to draw upon the knowledge and expertise of all the parties involved, including commercial fishermen and other members of the fishing industry, recreational fishermen, managers, researchers, and environmental advocates. Such an approach will expand the ability to collect and analyze pertinent data, explore new ideas, and develop new technologies.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks to begin to meet both of these needs: 1) gathering and assessing information supportive of sound management decisions; and 2) developing an ongoing collaborative and cooperative approach to fisheries research projects. In so doing, the research program that will be based on this RFP will be aimed at providing information for achieving both the sustainability of the fishery resources important to southern New England, and the sustainability of the livelihoods and economic well-being of the harvesters and coastal communities that depend on those resources.

## **Research Criteria**

This is a call for collaborative and cooperative fisheries research proposals to improve the sustainability of fisheries important to the southern New England region. Regional proposals are encouraged, but must have a connection to fisheries of importance to southern New England. Proposals concerned primarily with outreach and/or education will not be considered in this competition. Proposals **MUST** address one or more priority research areas as listed below. Projects **MUST** be a collaboration between members of the fishing community and fisheries scientists. Proposals submitted that address areas outside of the defined research priorities will not be considered for funding. Each proposal submitted will receive extensive peer review, with final reviews and award decisions made by an ad hoc, external, expert, scientific peer review panel.

### **Priorities for Collaborative Research**

The Southern New England Collaborative Research Initiative considers the following areas as priorities for collaborative and cooperative fisheries research. Proposals MUST address one or more of the following research priorities:

- (1) Fisheries Resource Sustainability
  - Improving stock assessment information
  - Bycatch reduction
  - Incorporating the use of fishery-dependent data for improved stock assessments
  
- (2) Ecosystems: As related to rebuilding fisheries stocks important to southern New England
  - Healthy habitats
  - Changing ecosystems
  
- (3) Socioeconomics of the Southern New England Industry
  - Added value: creating new business opportunities and enhancing existing ones
  - Evaluating cumulative impacts of regulations on the southern New England fishing industry

### **Informational Meeting**

An informational meeting about this RFP will be held in Hazard Room A/B in the Coastal Institute on the Narragansett Bay Campus of the University of Rhode Island on Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, 2008 from 5:30PM to 7:30PM (Hazard Room A/B is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Coastal Institute building; for directions visit: <http://www.gso.uri.edu/files/directions.pdf>). The intent of this meeting will be to discuss the specifics of the RFP, answer questions from potential applicants, and to foster interaction between interested research and industry partners.

### **Duration of Research Projects**

This Request for Proposals is for 1 or 2 year collaborative fisheries research projects. Pending a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review, funding for funded projects will begin 01 June 2009 and end 31 May 2011.

### **Funds Available**

A total amount of approximately \$895,000 is available for collaborative research. Projects seeking funding in amounts between \$25,000 and \$200,000 total per proposal will be considered.

### **Indirect Cost Limits**

The maximum amount of indirect costs allowed for this RFP is 25%.

### **Match Requirements**

There are no match requirements for this RFP.

### **Reporting Requirements**

All funded projects are required to submit progress reports and a final report including documentation of impacts during the project period. Guidelines for progress reports and the Final Completion Report will be sent to all funded project participants. Data collected in connection with funded projects will be required to be reported in accordance with requirements issued by the funding agency (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA]).

Any investigator failing to file required reports may be subject to cancellation of funding. Furthermore, any investigator that fails to file required progress reports and a Final Completion Report will not be eligible to compete for future Southern New England Collaborative Research Initiative funds should they become available.

### **Submittal Deadlines:**

*Outgoing server time stamps will be used to verify submittal by the required deadline. Proposals submitted after the deadline time/date will not be accepted for funding consideration.*

A Letter of Intent to Submit a Proposal MUST be submitted to Alan Desbonnet ([aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu)) at the Rhode Island Sea Grant College Program by 4:00 PM on 15 October 2008.

Full Proposals MUST be submitted to Alan Desbonnet ([aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu)) at the Rhode Island Sea Grant College Program by 4:00 PM on 30 October 2008.

### **Letter of Intent**

A Letter of Intent to submit a Proposal MUST be electronically sent to Alan Desbonnet ([aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu)) at the Rhode Island Sea Grant Program office by 4:00 PM on 15 October 2008. The Letter of Intent defines the project team, provides a working title for the proposed project, and a brief project description.

### **Full Proposals**

Full Proposals must be submitted electronically via email attachment to Alan Desbonnet ([aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu)) at Rhode Island Sea Grant Program office by 4:00 PM on 30 October 2008. It is preferred that proposals be submitted as a single PDF formatted document. However, proposals will be accepted as a single Microsoft Word document with allowable attachments as noted.

Each Proposal must have the following components, ordered as follows:

1. Title page
2. Project Summary
3. Proposal Narrative that should include:
  - a. Statement of the Problem Addressed
  - b. Relevance to Stated Priorities of this RFP
  - c. Project Objectives and Methods
  - d. Anticipated Outcomes
4. Budget
5. Curriculum vitae of collaborators
6. Letters of Agreement from all participants
7. A completed NEPA questionnaire

Full proposals are limited to 12 pages, including all text, figures, tables and references. Budget, CVs, Title Page, Letters of Agreement and a completed NEPA questionnaire are NOT considered part of the 12 page limitation. Any proposal that exceeds the stated 12 page maximum (e.g., Projected Summary + Project Narrative) will be “trimmed” by deleting any pages following Page 12.

Proposals should be prepared with 1 inch margins and using font size that is not less than 11 point. Italic fonts cannot be used for the main narrative except for scientific names.

Figures, illustrations, graphics and other images are considered to be part of the full proposal; these are NOT submitted as separate files or documents. All images are considered part of the proposal narrative and count toward the 12 page limit.

Applicants are welcome to make recommendations of up to four (4) competent external reviewers for their proposal. Reviewer names and email addresses should be included in the Cover Letter (or email message) accompanying the proposal.

Letters of Support will be accepted, but are not required. No more than three (3) Letters of Support will be accepted. Letters of Support will not count as part of the 12 page proposal limit, and can accompany the proposal as separate electronic attachments.

### **Budget Development**

All applicants MUST download and use the Budget Form provided at:

[http://www.seagrantadm.gso.uri.edu/snecri\\_rfp.htm](http://www.seagrantadm.gso.uri.edu/snecri_rfp.htm)

This required Budget Form may also be requested by email from Alan Desbonnet ([aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu)) at Rhode Island Sea Grant.

### **NEPA Questionnaire**

All applicants MUST download and complete the NEPA Questionnaire at:

[http://www.seagrantadm.gso.uri.edu/snecri\\_rfp.htm](http://www.seagrantadm.gso.uri.edu/snecri_rfp.htm)

The NEPA Form may also be requested by email from Alan Desbonnet ([aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu)) at Rhode Island Sea Grant.

### **Full Proposal Evaluations**

The Southern New England Collaborative Research Initiative intends to fund the best collaborative science targeting fishing industry challenges and issues relevant to southern New England fisheries. Each full proposal will be reviewed, where possible, by three external peer reviewers. Principal Investigators (PIs) will be given access to all external reviews for their proposal and will have the opportunity to respond in writing to the external reviews. A Full Proposal Review Panel will be convened during early January 2009 to review the Full Proposals, their peer reviews, and the PI responses to the reviews. External scientific peer review panel members will be responsible for rating and ranking full proposals, and based on these external evaluations, rankings, and ratings, will select proposals for funding. Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets.

The fundamental criteria for full proposal evaluation and their respective weights are:

- Scientific Merit, Rationale, and Innovation (30%)
- Responsiveness to SNECRI Priorities and Expected Benefits to the Southern New England Fishing Industry (50%)
- Professional Qualifications of Investigators (20%)

Key considerations for proposal evaluation are:

- **Rationale:** The degree to which the proposed project successfully addresses an important issue, problem, or opportunity in development, use, or management of southern New England fisheries.
- **Relationship to SNECRIs Priorities:** The degree to which the project targets the strategic priorities stated in this RFP.
- **Scientific or Professional Merit:** The degree to which the project will use science to improve sustainability of southern New England fisheries.
- **Qualifications and Past Record of Investigators:** The degree to which investigators are qualified by education, training, or experience to execute the proposed activities.
- **Collaboration:** The degree to which the fishing industry and scientific partners will collaborate in project planning, project execution, and the use of project findings.

### **Recommended Reference**

*Working Together: Developing a Cooperative Research Project and Proposal – A Guide for Fishermen and Others Interested in Participating in Cooperative Research in the Northeast*

*Region.* Produced by members of the Bycatch Coordinating Committee based on input of regional fishermen, scientists, and managers during a workshop in Portsmouth, NH, in January 2006. Copies available through the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation, the Rhode Island Fisheries Extension Program, East Farm Campus, University of Rhode Island, or online at the NOAA Fisheries Service Northeast Regional Office's website:  
<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/StateFedOff/coopresearch/guidelines/Cooperative%20Research%20Guide.pdf>

### **Glossary of Terms and Acronyms**

- **Indirect Costs or Overhead Expenses** – These costs are generally a requirement of the institution(s) for which the primary investigators work. Indirect costs are used by the universities and research institutions to “cover the costs of office and laboratory space and equipment (excepting specialized equipment purchased solely for one project), libraries, support staff, utilities, and other expenses necessary to the administration and support of the institution but which cannot be linked directly to a particular project in the same way as a researcher’s salary. These costs are shared across all research projects, and appear as a flat percentage surcharge on top of the direct costs.”\*
- **Letter of Agreement** – A letter signed by all collaborative research partners acknowledging a commitment to work together to accomplish the objectives of the developed proposal.
- **Letter of Intent** – A short, simple note stating intent to develop and submit a full proposal for review and funding consideration, and that provides a list of the project team members and a very brief overview of the collaborative research project.
- **Letter of Support** – A letter, generally from a user or benefactor of the products or outcomes of the proposed collaborative research, stating support for the proposed project and its end results.
- **Match Requirements** - Match requirements are “resources utilized in support of the project for which funding is not requested. This might be time spent by a fisherman or scientists in some way in support of the project that is not reflected in the project’s salary costs. This might also be ‘in-kind’ resources (such as fishing gear or vessel time) made available to the project for which funding is not required.”\*
- **NEPA** – National Environmental Policy Act
- **NOAA** – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- **PIs** – Principal Investigators
- **SNECRI** – Southern New England Collaborative Research Initiative (a project committee of the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation)

\* These definitions can be found in *Working Together: Developing a Cooperative Research Project and Proposal – A Guide for Fishermen and Others Interested in Participating in Cooperative Research in the Northeast Region.*

## RFP Timeline & Schedule

### 2008

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September 10	Request for Research Proposals Released
September 23	INFORMATIONAL MEETING on the RFP; 5:30–7:30PM on the Univ. Rhode Island Bay Campus; Coastal Institute Hazard Room A/B
<b>October 15</b>	<b>Letter of Intent to Submit a Proposal Due</b> , via electronic email submittal, 4:00PM to Alan Desbonnet ( <a href="mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu">aland@gso.uri.edu</a> ) at Rhode Island Sea Grant
<b>October 30</b>	<b>Full Proposals Due</b> , via electronic email submittal, 4:00PM to Alan Desbonnet ( <a href="mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu">aland@gso.uri.edu</a> ) at Rhode Island Sea Grant
November–December	Proposals in Review
December 05	Review Period Closes
December 10	PIs Receive Reviewer Comments for Rebuttal
<b>December 19</b>	<b>Letters of Response to Reviewer Comments Due</b> , via electronic email submittal, 12:00PM, to Alan Desbonnet ( <a href="mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu">aland@gso.uri.edu</a> ) at Rhode Island Sea Grant

### 2009

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Week of January 12	Scientific Review Panel Meets
Week of January 19	Applicants Notified and Funding Decisions Announced
February – May	NEPA Review Process
01 June 2009	Funding Available to PIs

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