

# Request for Research Proposals

Issued November 2, 2010

Continuation of the  
“Southern New England Collaborative Research Initiative”

A project of the

## Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation

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# General Information

## Introduction

The following document is the third in a series of Requests for Proposals (RFP) that have been issued by the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF) under the Southern New England Collaborative Research Initiative (SNECRI), a program that began in 2008. Given the critical nature of the circumstances facing all components of the commercial fishing industry in the southern New England region, it would appear that the need for collaborative fisheries research to better inform management decisions has never been greater.

From the groundfish fishery that is undergoing a transition to sector management, to the lobster fishery that is facing a multitude of challenges from shell disease to a recommended closure, to trawl fisheries being limited by restrictive bycatch limits, to the commercial shellfishing industry in Narragansett Bay that is invested in restoration efforts while also facing a series of changing environmental factors, the management challenges are very real. At the same time, for all commercial fisheries in the southern New England region, there are many unanswered questions involving the accuracy, timeliness, and completeness of stock assessment information; the natural history of commercially valuable species; how to fish more selectively, how climate change and other environmental factors may be changing species composition, abundance, distribution, and species interactions in southern New England waters; how various management strategies are impacting the commercial fishing industry; and how new marketing strategies can be employed to more effectively market the catch that is landed. The need for relevant, timely and practical information is very urgent, and collaborative research has an important role to play.

With these research needs in mind, this RFP is issued by the CFRF with the same goals and intent as the previous ones, except perhaps with a sense of added urgency. Those goals are to: 1) collect and assess information supportive of sound management decisions; and 2) develop an ongoing collaborative and cooperative approach to fisheries research projects. In so doing, the research program that will continue to be supported through this and future RFPs is aimed at providing the best science 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.

## **Important Note:**

**The CFRF has issued a “Funding Guidelines” document (dated November 1, 2010) to accompany this RFP. The Funding Guidelines document is intended to provide the general policies of the CFRF regarding funding support for all research programs it**

sponsors, and information on submitting a proposal, developing a proposal project budget, and sub-award procedures. It should be reviewed by all potential project team members (scientists and members of the commercial fishing industry) before submitting a proposal requesting funding support. A copy of this document may be obtained from the RI Sea Grant College Program by contacting Alan Desbonnet, Assistant Director [e-mail: [aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu) Phone: (401) 874-6813], or Deb Anthes, Business Manager, CFRF [e-mail: [danthes@cfrfoundation.org](mailto:danthes@cfrfoundation.org) Phone: (401) 515-4883], or through the CFRF website at [www.cfrfoundation.org](http://www.cfrfoundation.org)

### Components of this RFP

This RFP is divided into two major components:

- 1) Part I – Extension of original SNECRI program in accordance with stated research priority areas.
- 2) Part II – Directed Collaborative and Cooperative Research Opportunity – Subject area: Research Topics Important to Commercial Shellfishing Industry Working in Narragansett Bay

### General Research Criteria for Part I and Part II

Research proposals submitted under both parts of this RFP will need to follow the following general criteria:

- Project Teams must be comprised of both members of the fishing community and fisheries scientists and/or researchers in fields complementary to fisheries science;
- Proposals concerned primarily with outreach and/or education will not be considered;
- Proposals involving aquaculture research will not be considered;
- Proposals submitted that address areas outside of the defined research priority areas in Parts I and II will not be considered.

### Duration of Research Projects

Project length is not to exceed 2 years, with shorter term projects encouraged. Funding for funded projects will begin July 1, 2011 and end June 30, 2013 pending completion of any requirements to obtain a federal Experimental Fishing Permit or Scientific Research Letter of Acknowledgement, or state landing exemptions or state fishing licenses, and completion of the process of finalizing budgets and Work Agreements, including the submissions of all required safety and insurance documents. Any pre-spending activities for equipment procurement and assembly before July 1, 2011 must be approved by the

Board of Directors of the CFRF, and follow the completion of the preliminary administrative tasks listed in the Work Agreement.

Proposals pertaining to the subject of Conservation Engineering i.e. gear projects aimed at more selective fishing practices are required to be presented in a two tier approach that includes two phases: 1) Proof of Concept phase – This should encompass the preliminary work to do flume tank and/or at sea field studies to test an idea to determine if it should be pursued further; and 2) Full Research phase – This should encompass the planned full scientific protocol and analysis work that would be needed to fully evaluate the merits of the gear concept should the Proof of Concept phase results indicate further research is warranted. Methods and budgets should be organized and presented accordingly. The CFRF reserves the right to convene a separate panel apart from this RFP process to review the results from a proof of concept phase and to make a recommendation regarding going forward with a Full Research phase. The Board of Directors of the CFRF will consider this panel’s recommendations before deciding to offer funding to the Project Team for the Full Research phase.

### Review Process

Each proposal submitted under both Parts I and II will receive extensive peer review from both scientific and management perspectives. The RI Sea Grant College Program will administer the RFP process on behalf of the CFRF. For each proposal, a minimum of three external peer reviewers will review the science content and methods proposed and submit their reviews. The Principal Investigator, or main contact person listed for each Project Team will be given an opportunity to submit a rebuttal to the reviewers’ comments on behalf of the team. A full package of each proposal, all reviewer comments, and proposers’ rebuttals will be forwarded to members of a Technical Review Panel assembled by RI Sea Grant, and to members of the Executive Committee of the CFRF. An external, expert science Technical Review Panel will convene, review and discuss all materials related to each proposal, and rank them by scientific merit. When this process is complete, the discussion will be broadened to include input from the members of the Executive Committee of the CFRF. This part of the review will be focused on the management relevance of each proposal. The Technical Review Panel will submit its final recommendations regarding awards to the Board of Directors of the CFRF which will in turn make the final decision on which proposals will be offered awards. Project Teams accepting awards will enter into the stage of budget review, clarification, and finalization, and a Work Agreement will be developed with the Board of Directors of the CFRF.

### Evaluation Criteria

The fundamental criteria for full proposal evaluation and their respective weights for proposals submitted under Parts I and II are:

- Scientific merit, rationale, and innovation (30%)
- Relevance to management needs, timeliness, and responsiveness to the research topic and priority research areas delineated in Parts I and II (50%)
- Professional qualifications of investigators (20%)

Key considerations for proposal evaluation for proposals submitted under Parts I and II include:

- **Relevance:** 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.
- **Collaboration:** The degree to which the fishing industry and scientific partners will collaborate in project planning, project execution, and the use of project findings.
- **Timeliness:** The timeliness of the research subject in terms of important issues facing key fisheries in southern New England.
- **Relationship to SNECRI Priorities:** The degree to which the project targets the topic and research priority areas delineated in Parts I and II of this RFP.
- **Utilization:** The ease with which results are likely to be incorporated into fishery management practices or used by the commercial fishing industry.
- **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.
- **Reasonableness:** The reasonableness of the proposed budgets and the practicality of the methods proposed.

### Reporting Requirements

All funded Project Teams are required to submit progress reports and a final report including documentation of impacts during the project period. Any Project Team failing to file required reports may be subject to cancellation of funding. In addition, any Principal Investigator that fails to file required progress reports and a Final Completion Report on behalf of the Project Team will not be eligible to compete for future research programs sponsored by the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation. Guidelines for interim progress reports and the Final Completion Report will be sent to all funded project participants. Data collected and equipment designs developed in connection with funded projects will be required to be reported in accordance with requirements issued by the funding agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

### Outreach Requirements

As requested, a representative of each Project Team awarded funding will be available to present project results to one or more of the following: the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Councils, the Plan Development Team, the Stock Assessment Working Group, and the Research Steering Committee of the New England Fishery Management Council, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Project Teams should plan for this work task in their proposal budgets.

#### Qualifications of Members of the Project Teams

Members of Project Teams need to be able to meet basic qualifying criteria. For fishing industry partners, this means not having any fishing violations that would prohibit them from obtaining the necessary Experimental Fishing Permits to conduct the proposed at sea research, and/or should not have outstanding fines with the NMFS. Scientific researchers should be in good standing with the CFRF and the federal funding agency (NOAA/NMFS) in terms of completing previous research projects, including meeting all reporting requirements.

#### Insurance/Safety Training Requirements

Members of Project Teams engaged in at sea research will be required to provide Certificates of Insurance and Certificates of Safety Training, along with copies of F/V Safety Dockside Exams and documents verifying safety drills and inspections before commencing field research. These documents and examples of each are included in the Funding Guidelines document mentioned above.

#### Announcement of Awards

The review process and final decisions regarding funding awards are expected to be completed near the beginning of May 2011. The lead Principal Investigator or main contact person for each Project Team will be notified by mail and e-mail. The notification will include a summary of the Technical Review Panel's findings.

## Part I – Extension of SNECRI project

#### General

In September 2008 the CFR Foundation issued a RFP under the project title "Southern New England Collaborative Research Initiative", and this part of the RFP is a continuation of that program. Proposals submitted under Part II 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

#### Funds Available

Current funding available for this portion of the RFP is approximately \$700,000. Projects seeking funding in amounts between \$25,000 and \$200,000 total per proposal will be considered.

## Part II. Directed Collaborative and Cooperative Research Opportunity – Subject area: Research topics Important to the commercial shellfishing industry working in Narragansett Bay

#### General

In recognition of the importance of the commercial shellfishing industry in Narragansett Bay and the pressing research and information needs connected with managing that fishery, this component of the RFP is dedicated to collaborative research projects addressing that subject area. Research projects submitted under this part of the RFP must address topics within the general research priority areas identified in Part I of the RFP including Fisheries Resource Sustainability, Ecosystems: As related to rebuilding fisheries stocks important to southern New England; and Socioeconomics of the Southern New England Industry.

More specifically, proposals submitted under this part of the RFP should place an emphasis on one of the following:

- Improving shellfish stock assessment information
- Understanding environmental factors, and ecological and biological processes at work in Narragansett Bay as they relate to shellfish resources
- Creating new business opportunities and/or enhancing the existing ones for wild shellfish harvesters.

Project topics that include aquaculture research, or proposals aimed at supporting reseeding programs will not be considered under this RFP.

### Funds Available

Total funding available for this portion of the RFP is \$100,000. Projects seeking funding in amounts between \$25,000 and \$100,000 total per proposal will be considered.

## Submittal of Proposals

### Assistance

#### ***Proposal Submittal***

For assistance in submitting research proposals contact Alan Desbonnet, RI Sea Grant Program, phone: (401) 874-6813, e-mail: [aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu)

#### ***Formulating Project Teams***

For assistance in finding partners to work on a research idea, contact Peg Petruny-Parker, Executive Director, Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation, phone: (401) 515-4662, e-mail: [pparker@cfrfoundation.org](mailto:pparker@cfrfoundation.org) or Alan Desbonnet, RI Sea Grant Program, phone: (401) 874-6813, e-mail: [aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu)

### Proposal Submission

#### **Letter of Intent**

A Letter of Intent to submit a Proposal MUST be electronically sent as an e-mail attachment 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 **Friday, January 14, 2011**. The Letter of Intent defines the Project Team, designates the main contact person for the Project Team, provides a working title for the proposed project, and a brief project description.

#### **Full Proposal**

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 **Monday, January 31, 2011**. 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. Project Timeline indicating work elements and estimated budget needs by month and year
5. Budget including all components (research, supporting institution, and fishing industry)
6. Curriculum vitae of collaborators
7. Letters of Agreement from all participants

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.

Title page should include the names and contact information for all members of the Project Team and designate the main contact person.

### **Format**

Full proposals are limited to 12 pages, including all text, figures, tables and references. Title Page, Project Timeline, Budget, CVs, and Letters of Agreement are NOT considered part of the 12 page limitation. Any proposal that exceeds the stated 12 page maximum (e.g. Projected Summary and 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.

### **Budget Development**

#### Forms

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 or from Deb Anthes, Business Manager ([danthes@cfrfoundation.org](mailto:danthes@cfrfoundation.org)) at the CFRF.

#### Indirect Cost Limits

The maximum amount of indirect costs for charges processed through a supporting institution or agency is 25%. This does not include costs associated with the participation of the fishing industry members in the project which will be handled through a separate Work Agreement(s) with the fishing industry member(s) on the Project Team. To obtain a copy of a letter from the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation stating this policy, contact Alan Desbonnet, RI Sea Grant Program, phone: (401) 874-6813, e-mail: [aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu)

#### Match Requirement

There are no match requirements for this RFP.

#### Other Budget Items:

Policies and guidelines pertaining to budget items such as student support, personnel costs, insurance costs, net procurement, compensation arrangements for chartered fishing vessels, etc. are included in the Funding Guidelines document referred to above.

#### Academic Institution Notification

Members of Project Teams affiliated with an academic institution, federal or state agency, or other type of organization are asked to follow the appropriate notification procedures of their respective entity as part of the submittal procedure. Those affiliated with the University of Rhode are asked to contact the Office of Research Administration to file a Proposal Transmittal Sheet.

## **Submittal Deadlines**

**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 Program by 4:00 PM on Friday, January 14, 2011.**

**Full proposal must be submitted to Alan Desbonnet ([aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu)) at the Rhode Island Sea Grant Program by 4:00 PM on Monday, January 31, 2011.**

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.

## **Additional Information**

### **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.”\*
- **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 and Schedule

### **2010**

November 2, 2010 Request for Research Proposals Released

### **2011**

January 14, 2011 Letter of Intent to submit proposal due, via electronic e-mail submittal, 4:00 PM to Alan Desbonnet ([aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu)) at Rhode Island Sea Grant Program

January 31, 2011 Full proposals due, via electronic e-mail submittal, 4:00 PM to Alan Desbonnet ([aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu)) at Rhode Island Sea Grant Program

Jan. - March Proposals under review

March 15, 2011 Review period closes

March 17, 2011 Project Teams receive Reviewer Comments for rebuttal

March 25, 2011 Letters of response to Reviewer Comments due, via electronic e-mail submittal, 4:00 PM to Alan Desbonnet ([aland@gso.uri.edu](mailto:aland@gso.uri.edu)) at Rhode Island Sea Grant Program

Week of April 11 Technical Review Panel meets

April 2011 Review of recommendations by Technical Review Panel and final award decisions made by the Board of Directors of the CFRF

Early May 2011 Applicants notified

May 2011 Meetings with award recipients to finalize budgets and Work Agreements

June 2011 Funding decisions announced to the public

May – June 2011 Experimental Fishing Permit Process; LOA process

July 1, 2011 Funding available to Project Teams pending fulfillment of all permit and Work Agreement requirements