

Request for Research Proposals

Issued Wednesday, September 2, 2009

Continuation of the
“Southern New England Collaborative Research Initiative”

A project of the

Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation

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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, September 15, 2009 from 5:30PM to 7:30 PM.

This RFP is being administered by:
Rhode Island Sea Grant College Program
University of Rhode Island
Graduate School of Oceanography
Room 129 Coastal Institute
Narragansett, RI 02882
www.seagrant.gso.uri.edu

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General Information

Introduction

The Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFR Foundation) was founded in 2004 by a group of commercial fishermen interested in supporting research to develop practical solutions to common problems affecting economically-important fisheries in southern New England. The CFR Foundation's primary goals are to support research that assists in the achievement of sustainable fisheries through better information and effective technologies, and to establish collaborative working relationships among scientists, managers, and members of the commercial fishing industry. The CFR Foundation's Board of Directors, comprised solely of commercial fishermen and individuals working in support businesses for the commercial fishing industry, oversees the CFR Foundation's work.

The CFR Foundation is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) as a continuation of the "Southern New England Collaborative Research Initiative" (SNECRI), a project begun by the CFR Foundation in August 2008. As delineated in the first RFP issued under the SNECRI project, resource management decisions need to be based on sound science. 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 science-based management strategies that protect and rebuild fisheries resources while minimizing impacts to fishing communities. At the same time, there is the need to develop and institute more selective harvesting approaches, to explore new ways to better utilize and market fisheries products, to promote efficient business practices and uncover new opportunities, and to 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 long-term collaborative, working relationships between members of the fishing community and scientists, fosters ongoing communication, and draws upon the knowledge and expertise of all the parties involved. 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 continue to develop these needs 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.

Components of this RFP

This RFP is divided into two major components:

- 1) Part I – Directed Collaborative and Cooperative Research Opportunity – Subject area: Spiny Dogfish, *Squalus acanthias*
- 2) Part II – Extension of SNECRI project following same research priority areas.

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

Projects must be on the order of 1 to 2 years in length. Pending completion of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review and attainment of the necessary NEPA approvals, plus the attainment of any required federal Experimental Fishing Permits or state landing exemptions or state fishing licenses, funding for funded projects will begin 01 June 2010 and end 31 May 2012. Any pre-spending activities for equipment procurement and assembly before 01 June 2010 must be approved by the Board of Directors of the CFR Foundation.

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 Program will administer the RFP process on behalf of the CFR Foundation. For each proposal, a minimum of three, external peer reviewers will review the science content and methods proposed and submit their reviews. The Principal Investigators for each Project Team will be given an opportunity to rebut the reviewers' comments. 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 CFR Foundation. 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 CFR Foundation. 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 CFR Foundation 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 CFR Foundation.

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 proposal 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 CFR Foundation 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.

Announcement of Awards

The review process and final decisions regarding funding awards are expected to be completed near the beginning of February 2010. The lead Principal Investigator 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. Directed Collaborative and Cooperative Research Opportunity – Subject area: Spiny Dogfish, *Squalus acanthias*

General

One particular species of fish, spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*), has been discussed as being of critical importance to the commercial fishing industry in southern New England. Proposals submitted under Part I must address one or more of the following research topics for this species:

- (1) Accurate stock assessments
 - Supplementing NMFS trawl surveys
- (2) Sex ratio in the overall population and distribution of sexes
- (3) Role of spiny dogfish in the ecosystem

Funds Available

Total funding available for this portion of the RFP is approximately \$267,000. Projects seeking funding in amounts between \$25,000 and \$200,000 total per proposal will be considered.

Part II – 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 project. 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 \$330,000, with a proposal for additional funding pending final review by NOAA/NMFS. Projects seeking funding in amounts between \$25,000 and \$200,000 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

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 or Alan Desbonnet, RI Sea Grant Program, phone: (401) 874-6813, e-mail: aland@gso.uri.edu

Information Session

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, September 15, 2009, 5:30 – 7:30 PM.** (Hazard Room A/B is located on the first floor of the Coastal Institute building; for directions visit: <http://www.gso.uri.edu/files/directions.pdf>.) The intent of this meeting is to provide basic information about this RFP, answer questions from potential applicants, and to provide an opportunity for interactions between interested researchers and members of the commercial fishing industry.

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) at the Rhode Island Sea Grant Program office by 4:00 PM on **Friday, October 16, 2009.** 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) at Rhode Island Sea Grant Program office by 4:00 PM on **Friday, October 30, 2009.** 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
6. Curriculum vitae of collaborators
7. Letters of Agreement from all participants
8. A completed NEPA questionnaire

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, 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 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://seagrantadm.gso.uri.edu/calls_page.htm. This required Budget Form may also be requested by email from Alan Desbonnet (aland@gso.uri.edu) at Rhode Island Sea Grant.

Indirect Cost Limits

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

Match Requirement

There are no match requirements for this RFP.

Student Tuition

Budget requests for student tuitions should not exceed \$10,000.

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.

NEPA Questionnaire

All applicants MUST download and complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Questionnaire at: http://seagrantadm.gso.uri.edu/calls_page.htm
The NEPA Form may also be requested by email from Alan Desbonnet (aland@gso.uri.edu) at Rhode Island Sea Grant.

When completing the questionnaire, Project Team members are asked to be as specific as possible regarding the field research techniques to be used, sampling sites, and time of year (month and year) during which field research is expected to take place.

Submittal Deadlines

A Letter of Intent to submit a proposal must be submitted to Alan Desbonnet (aland@gso.uri.edu) at the Rhode Island Sea Grant Program by 4:00 PM on Friday, October 16, 2009.

Full proposal must be submitted to Alan Desbonnet (aland@gso.uri.edu) at the Rhode Island Sea Grant Program by 4:00 PM on Friday, October 30, 2009.

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.”*

- **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 and Schedule

2009

- September 2, 2009 Request for Research Proposals Released
- September 15, 2009 Information Meeting , 5:30 – 7:30 pm, URI Bay Campus, Coastal Institute Building, Hazard Room A/B
- October 16, 2009 Letter of Intent to submit proposal due, via electronic e-mail submittal, 4:00 PM to Alan Desbonnet (aland@gso.uri.edu) at Rhode Island Sea Grant Program
- October 30, 2009 Full proposals due, via electronic e-mail submittal, 4:00 PM to Alan Desbonnet (aland@gso.uri.edu) at Rhode Island Sea Grant Program
- Nov. – Dec. Proposals under review
- December 4, 2009 Review period closes
- December 9, 2009 Project Teams receive Reviewer Comments for rebuttal
- December 18, 2009 Letters of response to Reviewer Comments due, via electronic e-mail submittal, 4:00 PM to Alan Desbonnet (aland@gso.uri.edu) at Rhode Island Sea Grant Program

2010

- Week of Jan. 18 Technical Review Panel meets
- Week of Jan. 25 Review of recommendations by Technical Review Panel and final award decisions made by the Board of Directors of the CFRF
- Week of Feb. 1 Applicants notified
- February 2010 Meetings with award recipients to finalize budgets and Work Agreements
- February 26, 2010 Funding decisions announced to the public
- February – May NEPA Review Process, Experimental Fishing Permit Process
- June 1, 2010 Funding available to Project Teams pending fulfillment of all permit, insurance, and safety requirements