

Tab G, No. 5(b)

DRAFT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS NOT COUNCIL APPROVED

Expanded Sampling of the Fleet for Effort Monitoring in the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Industry

Proposal Submission Deadline: TBD

Term of Contract: 12-18 months

Maximum Funding Available for Work: \$350,000

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) seeks a highly-qualified contractor to organize and expand a vessel effort monitoring system for the federally permitted Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry. The current Gulf of Mexico electronic logbook (ELB) program that utilized a 3G cellular network to transmit data is no longer supported, and the server became unviable for data storage in December 2020. Approximately 1/3 of the vessels in the shrimp industry have been selected by the Science and Research Director to participate in the ELB monitoring program¹. After transmission of the data from the shrimp vessels, effort monitoring data are securely housed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Fisheries Science Center (Science Center) and used for assessment and monitoring efforts including bycatch of finfish and interactions with protected resources across the Gulf of Mexico. The Council, in coordination with NMFS, is seeking to develop a new program that will provide for continued collection, storage, and transmission of shrimp vessel location data that are used to estimate shrimping effort. This new program is intended to replace the recently discontinued shrimp ELB program. As part of this effort, NMFS is developing minimum data requirements for the shrimp ELB program, and an approval process will need to be completed prior to adding this program to list of approved software. In the interim, the Council is developing a document to require the owner or operator of a vessel with a valid federal shrimp permit to install an approved vessel monitoring system that, at a minimum, archives vessel location and automatically transmits this data to NMFS. Thus, the intent and need for this study is to test the P-Sea Windplot² software program with a portion of the shrimp fleet in the near term to determine if it meets the needs of industry, Council, and the NMFS Science Center.

Proposals should identify by region/state the number of vessels that will volunteer to participate in the proposed pilot program for effort monitoring in the Gulf of Mexico.

¹ <https://ecfr.io/Title-50/Section-622.51>

² <http://www.p-sea.com/>

The proposed work should clearly define methodology and intent for meeting the NMFS software and hardware requirements approval process while documenting the estimated costs to the industry. The proposal should detail the methodology proposed for archiving the vessel location, data retention, and automatic transmission of the data to NMFS when within cellular/satellite range of land.

A team will establish selection criteria and review the proposals after the proposal submission deadline. The Council will develop an agreement with the selected contractor(s) with milestones and deliverables after the review and selection process. The selected contractor(s) will work with Council staff.

Background: During its January 2021 meeting, the Council identified unspent Council funds in 2020. These unspent funds were primarily due to limited travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council is considering funding an expanded study that utilizes P-Sea Windplot software as a replacement. Preliminary meetings with industry, such as the Shrimp Advisory Panel meeting³ suggest that a majority of the shrimp fleet currently use this software program, which is installed on a computer desktop or laptop computer housed onboard the vessel, so the learning curve and potential annual cellular/satellite expenses are anticipated to be minimal. Thus, leaders in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp industry support using this type of software program.

Application Process:

Contractor Qualifications: The successful applicant or applicant team will have demonstrable experience in fisheries, marine ecology, spatial management, or related field.

How to Apply:

Executive Summary: A summary of the work proposed, including a brief summary of the applicant's qualifications.

Proposed Plan of Work: Proposals should identify by state, the number of shrimp vessels actively participating in the fishery, that will volunteer to participate in the proposed pilot program in the Gulf of Mexico. The proposed work should clearly define methodology and intent for meeting the NMFS software and hardware requirements approval process. The proposal should also detail the estimated costs to the industry for vessel location monitoring and details about analysis of data for fleet effort monitoring on a monthly basis. The proposal should detail the methodology proposed for archiving the vessel location, data retention, and automatic transmission of the data to NMFS when within cellular/satellite range. The proposal should also include the timeline of field work with industry volunteers, analysis, and mid-term and final report delivery dates.

³ https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/D-8-Shrimp-AP-Summary-March-2021_final_revised.pdf

Qualifications of Applicant: A summary of the qualifications of the applicant and other team members, if applicable. A curriculum vitae should be included for each individual who is expected to work on the project.

Proposed Budget: A detailed budget, including the basis for the charges (e.g., hourly rates, fixed fees, overhead costs). Travel costs for meeting with industry should be detailed, in addition to a mid-term and final report to the Council.

Letters of Support: Letters demonstrating collaboration with shrimp industry leaders will be ranked higher.

Applicant References: Names, titles, full addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers for three clients for whom the applicant has provided similar services to those requested or are familiar with the applicant's work and the quality of the applicant's work products.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria and Next Steps: Proposals will be evaluated based on methodology and scope outlined in the proposed work plan. Ability to deliver, in a timely manner, a quality work product as determined by qualifications including prior experience, references, and budget. The Council may request additional information as deemed necessary or negotiate modifications prior to providing support for a proposal. Once a proposal is selected for funding, a formal contract will be developed with the applicants.