GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

2404 Government Street, Ocean Springs, MS 39564

(228) 875-5912 • (228) 875-6604 Fax

www.gsmfc.org

Larry B. Simpson
Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) is implementing an Oil Disaster Recovery Program (ODRP) to provide assistance to the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) seafood industry through programs designed to increase demand for Gulf seafood products. The ODRP initiatives include marketing of Gulf seafood, seafood certification and labeling, and testing. Each of these programs depends on the management of critical information about the seafood product as it moves through the supply chain from "boat to plate."

To deliver this critical information, the ODRP is in the process of implementing an electronic traceability system that will integrate with the seafood marketing, seafood certification and labeling, and testing programs of the ODRP.

The GSMFC is now requesting proposals to advance and support the traceability and seafood certification initiatives of the ODRP program through the services of an independent part-time liaison. Proposals should contain the following:

- A detailed description of the work proposed
- Information describing the respondent's qualifications for conducting the work
- Detailed budget information

Proposals should reflect the respondent's knowledge of (1) electronic seafood traceability systems, (2) seafood sustainability certifications, and (3) experience and expertise working with seafood harvesters, seafood dealers and processors, and seafood buyers (retailers, food service, distributors, etc.).

Description of the Work

The work consists of supporting and facilitating the goals of the Commission's ODRP program by communicating the objectives and benefits of the overall program and gaining support for the (1) standardized electronic platform for seafood traceability and (2) seafood certification initiatives.

With respect to the traceability program, the liaison will work with stakeholders of the Gulf seafood industry — particularly, seafood dealers and processors— to educate them regarding the function and benefit of traceability in the marketplace and as a key component of the overall ODRP initiative. The traceability program has set a goal of bringing 1,000 seafood dealers and 200 seafood processors online with the voluntary traceability technology by the end of 2014. The

-Alabama-   -Florida-   -Louisiana-   -Mississippi-   -Texas-

traceability technology will be available to processors and dealers at no cost through the end of 2013. Developing a robust traceability program will also require support from the downstream nodes of the supply chain that include seafood distributors, retailers, and food service entities. Creating pull from this sector of the supply chain will encourage participation and showcase the benefits of employing a traceability system.

While the specific role of the Commission has not yet been determined, a liaison will also potentially support the seafood certification initiatives of the GSMFC. This liaison would act as a resource to GSFMC members and the Gulf seafood industry; assist the GSMFC as it moves forward with certification activities, provide supporting materials, information and opinion; and, once a decision to enter a fishery into assessment is made, work with the fishing industry and fishery management representatives to facilitate the flow of critical documents during the independent assessment process.

Each initiative will require attendance and the delivery of presentations at various marine fishery stakeholder meetings (e.g. Gulf Council, Gulf Commission, and industry meetings). These meetings will be critical to educating governmental individuals and the seafood industry on the benefits of a well-implemented traceability and seafood certification program. The work will require travel, knowledge of the seafood industry, knowledge of fisheries management organizations, and strong communication skills.

Background and Problem Statement

On April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico approximately 50 miles south of the mouth of the Mississippi River. The site of the explosion is recognized as one of the nation's most productive natural resources, both commercially and recreationally, for the harvest of pelagic and reef fisheries. As the rig continued to burn, it ultimately lost buoyancy, and two days later, sank in approximately 5,000 feet of water as significant amounts of oil discharged from the broken wellhead. The well ultimately discharged approximately five million barrels into the GOM, making it the largest accidental marine oil disaster in the history of the industry.

Among the recognized impacts of the oil disaster was the closure of commercial and recreational fishing grounds in both offshore and inshore waters. The economic impacts on the fishing industry are still being quantified, but it is recognized that the demand for Gulf seafood products has significantly decreased, causing many harvesters, processors, and distributors throughout the GOM region to close or reduce economic activity. The ODRP is charged with providing assistance to the Gulf fishing industry through programs designed to increase demand for Gulf seafood products. Two initiatives of the Commission's ODRP include the development and implementation of an electronic traceability system and the independent certification of seafood products based on the robustness of the stock and the fishery management system.

Demand for seafood products is partially driven by how the market responds to information about the product. The success in creating and re-establishing demand for Gulf seafood largely depends on the management of critical information about the product as it moves through the supply chain from the boat to the plate. Information integration that ensures that products can be

traced forward and backward places confidence into the marketplace by creating marketing tools, integrating external data (e.g., seafood testing results), addressing complex fisheries management questions, and auditing the supply chain to mitigate risk. The demand for healthy fisheries from the GOM will potentially be increased through an enhanced electronic traceability system.

Demand for seafood products is also partially driven by the confidence consumers have in product names and labels. The global seafood industry has responded with the development of independent, third-party eco-labeling programs to certify species that are caught in fisheries that are managed in an environmentally responsible manner. Labeling programs have been shown to have economic impacts by improving the accessibility to markets and potentially increasing price premiums. In fact, major seafood retailers such as Whole Foods and Wal-Mart have indicated that they will only sell certified marine products exhibiting specific eco-labels, and all major retailers have developed seafood sourcing policies with sustainability claims referencing third-party eco-labeling programs. Therefore, the demand for seafood products from healthy GOM fisheries could potentially increase through eco-labeling certifications.

This RFP solicits an independent contractor to assist the Commission's ODRP and the states of the Gulf in implementing a robust seafood traceability system and certifications for seafood products.

Proposal

The ODRP seafood traceability and sustainability certification liaison proposal should consist of the following sections:

(A) Traceability Program:

(1) Support the development and strategy for the Gulf traceability system
- Provide assistance and input regarding traceability requirements
- Serve on the Executive Project Management committee
- Assist with the development of promotional materials such as white papers, flyers, websites, and other informational resources

(2) Work with processors and dealers in order to encourage implementation of the technology
- Define the strategy and approach for gaining processor and dealer commitment to the traceability program
- Meet with processors, dealers, and industry organizations in order to share the benefits of participating in the ODRP programs and implementing the ODRP electronic traceability system
- Answer questions concerning traceability systems and the implementation of traceability into the businesses of processors and dealers
- Assist processors and dealers as they come online with the traceability technology

(3) Create support for the program via distributors, retailers, and the food service industry
- Help develop a strategy and plan for gaining support of distributors, retailers, and the food service industry
- Meet with downstream businesses in the supply chain in order to explain the Gulf ODRP program, the benefits to supporting the program, and the importance of the traceability system
- Work with distributors, retailers, and the food service sector in order to create pull that will ultimately encourage processors and dealers to adopt the traceability technology
- Assist distributors, retailers, and the food service industry as the traceability program comes online

(4) Supply information regarding the traceability program for the Gulf
- Identify, develop, and present the Gulf traceability program to fishery stakeholders such as industry organizations, non-governmental organizations, fishery management regulatory bodies and agencies, and other stakeholders as deemed appropriate
- Manage the development of internet-based tools (e.g. a website) for the Gulf electronic traceability program in order to educate fishery stakeholders and answer questions concerning the project

(B) Seafood Certification Program:

(1) Supply expertise concerning sustainability certifications
- Provide assistance as a sustainability certification consultant
- Help with the development of the Commission's approach to sustainability certifications

(2) Facilitate the flow of critical documents into the certification process
- Work with fisheries management organizations, fishing industry representatives and other organizations as deemed appropriate in order to facilitate the flow of information as decisions are made regarding entering fisheries into assessment and during the independent assessment processes

(3) Present information concerning seafood certifications at various fishery stakeholder meetings
- Identify, develop, and present the Gulf seafood certification initiatives to industry organizations, non-governmental organizations, fishery management regulatory bodies and agencies, and other stakeholders as deemed appropriate

General Proposal Information

The proposal should specifically create a plan to implement and support the aforementioned items throughout the Gulf of Mexico seafood supply chain from award of task (~August 2011) through 2014. An extension to this term opportunity may be available given funding availability, work performance, and documented accomplishments.

The proposal should clearly present the proposed project and its relations to the specified scope of the work. Proposals should include the following: a narrative description, statement of work, approach, qualifications and experiences as they relate to seafood traceability and sustainable seafood certifications, curriculum vitae of the applicant, references, any necessary budgetary information, and a copy of the workers' compensation insurance policy. The proposal may be submitted on behalf of multiple businesses or individuals and may sub-contract appropriate proposal requirements (e.g. website development, etc.) to qualified entities.

Please follow the instructions for preparing proposals for GSMFC awards (Attachment A). Applicants should be willing to work closely with the GSMFC staff. Funds for this project are provided by NOAA Award No. NA10NMF4770481. If the proposal is accepted for funding, this project must comply with all federal government audit principles/procedures and the Department of Commerce's Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals:

- Qualifications of the applicant
- Range of similar activities performed by the applicant
- Description of the approach
- Cost of the proposal

All proposals must be submitted by **August 22, 2011**. Proposals should be sent to the following physical or electronic mailing address:

Alex Miller, Staff Economist
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
2404 Government Street
Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564
Phone: (228) 875-5912
FAX: (228) 875-6604
E-mail: amiller@gsmfc.org

Attachment A

Instructions for Preparing Proposals for
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

Proposal should be a scientific or technical action plan of activities to be accomplished. Please use the following format when preparing your proposal:

1. **Applicant name:** Identify the name of the applicant organization.

2. **Budget period:** Provide start and end date of the budget period.

3. **Title:** A short descriptive name of the proposal.

4. **Objective:** What will this proposal do? State concisely the purpose of the proposal in quantified terms where possible.

5. **Job Title:** If a proposal is subdivided into two or more jobs, they must be identified separately.

6. **Job Objectives:** Provide an objective(s) for each job element, as appropriate.

7. **Job Procedures:** A detailed 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;
   c. Statement of Authority/Confidentiality, if applicable:
      -Surveys are being conducted under the State's authority. If not, identify the authority.
      -Surveys are being conducted under State's confidentiality provisions. If not, identify the authority and include copies of confidentiality certificates.

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 of costs 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 your 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. Although 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 **a copy of the current negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be included with your proposal. The maximum overhead rate that the Commission will accept is 25%.**