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JANUARY 15, 2025 10:00 AM
GOVERNANCE BODY MEETING
KONIAG BOARDROOM 3800 CENTERPOINT DR., SUITE 700

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call and introductions
3. Safety moment – Tom Panamaroff
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Approval of minutes, October 30, 2024

Old Business

N/A

New Business

6. Regional Liaisons Update (written report & 5 min update each)
7. Review of RFPs/RFQs closed and awarded since last meeting.
 - [Analysis of 2024 Seaweed Tissue Data](#) – Under contract
 - [Scientific Consulting Services Related to Heavy Metals and Kelp](#)
 - [Southeast Alaska Mariculture Liaison](#) - Awarded
 - [Other Mariculture Species Research & Development #2](#) - NOI
 - [Kelp Agricultural Product Development & Testing](#) – Contracts pending
8. Project Updates (15 minutes on goals, metrics, equity)
 - Revolving Loan Fund
 - Governance, Coordination and Outreach (EDDs & AMA)
 - Workforce Development (UAA, UAF, UAS)
 - Research and Development (ADFG, AFDF)
 - Marketing
 - Green Energy (AFDF)
 - Equipment and Technology (DEC)
9. [2024 Alaska Mariculture Industry Overview](#)
10. [Alaska Mariculture Series on The Fish Site](#)
11. Theory of Change - Ecotrust
12. Kelp Processing Technical Report

** Break for Lunch (approx. 12:30)

- EDA Remarks – Shirley Kelly, Frank Wessbecher

Other Topics

13. Review of RFPs/RFQs and contracts (issued or upcoming)
 - [Kelp Seed Quality Improvement](#) - issued
 - Mariculture Marine Safety and Farmer Knowledge Exchange - soon
 - Equipment #2 RFP - soon
 - Marketing Promotional Activities RFP – in development
14. Upcoming Events
 - Southeast Conference Mid-Session Summit: February 11-13
 - Mariculture Conference of Alaska: February 18-20

Public comment

15. Next Governance Body meeting on April 15 (Q3 date in July?)
16. Good of the order

Governance Body

Gregg Renkes, Chenega Corp

Richard Peterson, T&H

Chase Berenson, Aleut Ent.

Tom Panamaroff, Koniag

Thea Thomas, AMA

Jason Lessard, AMA

Heather McCarty, AMA

Markos Scheer, AMA

Cassidi Cameron, KPEDD

Kristin Smith, PWSEDD

Wanetta Ayers, SWAMC

Robert Venables, SEC

Julie Decker, Seafood
Industry



(Scan for Meeting Packet)

**AMC GOVERNANCE BODY MEETING
MINUTES FOR GOVERNANCE BODY MEETING
OCTOBER 30TH, 2024**

Microsoft Teams meeting

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app or room device**

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Meeting ID: 232 184 224 687

Passcode: BWMknD

Alaska Mariculture Cluster

Governance Body

Robert Venables – SEC

Ralph Wolfe – TNH

Rhonda Weyner – SWAMC

*Tom Panamaroff – Koniag
Corp*

Chase Berenson – Aleut Corp

Kristin Carpenter – PWSEDD

Gregg Renkes – Chugach Corp

Jason Lessard – AMA

Heather McCarty – AMA

Thea Thomas – AMA

Markos Scheer – AMA

*Julie Decker – Seafood
Industry, PSPA*

Cassidi Cameron- KPEDD

The AMC Governance Body meeting was called to order at 10:07 am on October 30th, 2024.

Members present: Jason Lessard, Ralph Wolfe, Markos Scheer, Robert Venables, Thea Thomas, Cassidi Cameron, Tom Panamaroff, Chase Berenson, Greg Renkes, Heather McCarty.

Non-Governance body member in person attendance: of Charlie Herrington, Dan Lesh, Lindsey Hammer, Cindy Jimenez, Pheobe Koenig, Jenna Kennedy, Erik O'Brien, Chase Coleman, Shirley Kelly (EDA representative), Melissa Shawnweather.

Virtual non governance body member attendance included: Sam Friedman, Keolani Booth, Sean Den Adel, Noah Meyer, Shanoy Anderson, Alex Huller, Lexa Meyer, Briana Murphy, Missy Good, Karli Tyance Hassell, Bobbi Hudson (Pacific Shellfish Institute), Kristy Clement, Haley Terpenney, Sara Ebersole.

Opening remarks: Tom Panamaroff gave an overview of Koniag and a safety site briefing. Introductions around the room followed, including introductions of those participating virtually.

Approval of August 14th, 2024, meeting minutes

The minutes were approved without objection.

Old Business

None

New Business

Regional Liaisons Update:

SE Alaska; Brooke Leslie- Spruce Root & Keolani Booth- EcoTrust

Recently, there has been significant interest in geoduck and oyster farming and enthusiasm for establishing diverse shellfish and kelp farms, whether food grade or not.

Kenai Peninsula, Alaska; Briana Murphy, CRRC

There has been a large focus on engaging youth in mariculture activities and traditional subsistence practices.

Kodiak, Alaska; Lexa Meyer & Robbie Townsend Vennel, KALI

Questions regarding rollout of revolving loan fund, and how it could integrate with another round of AMA matching grants. USACE Letter of Permission ESA Threatened/Endangered Species Mitigation Measures for Aquatic Farms: Due to the necessity of needing a USACE permit to operate a farm in navigable waters, including state waters (0-3 mi), farms must engage with the NMFS regarding threatened and endangered species. This usually involves a section 7 informal Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation with the NMFS Habitat Protection Office. Recent USACE permit applications have been receiving pushback from NMFS (see written report for more details). NMFS has no plan as to how the information will remain confidential, how it will be used, nor is there any format or template for a report. Farmers already report harvest and sale information to the State of Alaska annually, the state does not ask for this level of information. There is also no precedence for this level of oversight and reporting for any state-managed fisheries in Alaska.

As mariculture continues to expand in coastal Alaska it will be imperative that the industry collectively engage with regulators to develop solutions to these issues that work physically and financially for farmers. KALI requested assistance from the AMA to achieve greater understanding between regulators and farmers to develop regulations that support rather than hinder ecologically responsible mariculture development.

Prince William Sound, Alaska; Sean den Adel, CRRC

Cordova/Eyak community members seem supportive but simultaneously apprehensive about the kelp farming industry. More fishermen are seeking to diversify their income streams following a difficult seine season in PWS, but many also worry about the lack of processing equipment/infrastructure and markets for local kelp farmers. Due to lack of secure market opportunities, most people seem not ready to invest their own time and money into this industry. Kelp farmers are actively seeking grants to operate and expand their farming operations such as the USDA Value-Added Producer Grant.

Southwest, Alaska:

Common questions posed by Unalaska and Dutch Harbor residents and other interested parties are:

- How could people make money from growing and selling kelp or shellfish?
- What is the value considering the high cost of supplies and shipping?
- Is this a fad, niche, boutique market or is it a commodity to be sold in bulk?

Fishing Industry workers have expressed interest in using their existing skills and equipment to fill gaps in revenue generation. A common concern of residents in Unalaska and Dutch Harbor is water quality, specifically the status of red tide and paralytic shellfish poisoning. People also think there is too much kelp in the near shore waters, and there are more sea otters and less sea urchins now than in the past. Mariculture site selection and permitting was identified as a potential challenge to any operator. Bays and coves in and around the communities of Unalaska are subject to high wind and wave action, vessel traffic, subsistence food harvesting, and other commercial and recreational activities.

General discussion continued on how AMA could provide more information and consistent engagement within the rural communities. AMA hopes to remedy this with additional staff, possibly an “Outreach Manager”. AMA requested input on to best update the Governance Body, perhaps more frequently, to improve understanding and opportunities in the mariculture industry. It was also suggested to reach out to the regional ANSCA corporations and regional Tribes specifically.

Other topics discussed (details in meeting packet)

Grant/Loan Programs Access - more information and engagement needs to happen.

New Entry Activity - Barriers to entry, discouragement over high upfront costs and general lack of knowledge of mariculture, and what the different industry roles and activities look like in real time. There is low commitment from several regional fishers due to a lack of local profitable businesses to prove viability.

Industry Cooperation and Development - Existing permit holders possibly open to partnerships to grow capacity but also get those partners to apply for permits as well. Overall, it seems there is a sense that the industry is attainable for folks after realizing there are funds and groups dedicated to helping Alaska residents build up the economy through mariculture. There is a growing interest in pursuing organic certification for kelp crops.

Leasing / Permits - There are growing concerns about the amount of coastal space being leased for kelp farms that remain inactive (after receiving permits for aquatic farm leases). The overhead costs for leases and insurance continue to increase annually. This leads to reduced chances of viability for small mariculture farms. Many questions revolved around the aquatic farm permitting process, regulatory agency engagement with Tribal governments during the permitting process, and economics surrounding kelp farming. Concerns with permitting due to the new ESA listing of sunflower sea star.

Product Processing - There is a lack of processing capacity and infrastructure, limiting the growth and viability of the kelp farming industry and a lack of access to in-person food safety and handling training.

Native and Tribal Entities - Tribes are sovereign entities and should not be referred to as stakeholders. This should not be another extractive industry where tribes & communities are left behind.

Markets - Farmers cannot afford to apply for loans (or stay in business) without markets and income streams. There is still a lack of definitive markets. Questions around startup costs and revenue individuals can expect. Shellfish farmers expressed reservations about mariculture being incorporated into ASMI’s marketing umbrella.

Marine Mammal Protection - Discussion around mariculture being included within the Marine Mammal Protection act.

Review of RFPs/RFQs closed and awarded since last meeting.

o Kelp Agriculture Product Development & Testing RFP- 11 proposals (1.31 million in requests). Some of the project proposals focus on bio stimulants, one on kelp compost. Nine out of the 11 proposals are based in the Prince William Sound or Kenai Peninsula. SEC will encourage collaboration toward community and regional projects with impact.

o De-Risking Investments in Aquatic Farming – AFDF has awarded a contract to Kelson Marine. The project scope will encompass ocean modeling and data collection. It is being finalized, totaling around \$1 million. Oceans Alaska contract, totaling around \$70,000 is being finalized and will target investigating optimal oyster spat size for transplanting.

o Equipment Round 1 update- SEC is in the process of finalizing subaward agreements with the equipment awarded entities. SEC is awaiting final approval from EDA for multiple subaward recipients, before reimbursing/approving drawdowns for equipment.

Project Updates:

Revolving loan fund- The Revolving Loan fund is close to launching with final legal documents under development and final EDA approval. Initial partners include Northrim, Tongass Federal Credit Union, Spruce Root, and hopefully the State's RLF program. The program is primarily focused on partnering with these lending institutions with guaranteed collateral support.

Gov, Coord, Outreach Updates:

KPEDD- KPEDD has been coordinating between entities within the Kenai Peninsula to facilitate partnerships for the Agricultural RFP. KPEDD has been coordinating between AVTEC and other vocational entities, Challenger center (food security and workforce development intentions) to help bolster workforce development initiatives throughout the peninsula.

PWSEDD- PWSEDD signed a contract with Sirputis and will be purchasing a kelp dryer, within their equipment subaward agreement. They will be renting a shredder, blancher, hopper with USDA funds. They have finalized the processing location. The location is currently permitted as a seafood processing location. Soon, that permit will lapse, and the property owners will apply for a mariculture processing permit. Under the PWSEDD Feasibility study contract, a draft business plan is available for the shared seafood processing facility. This draft plan was received early in October.

SWAMC- Close to announcing a new Executive Director hire. Mariculture Director travelled to Mexico to see a batch kelp drier. The mariculture director is close to installing this same model of drier under the Joint Innovations Project. The Mariculture Director conducted an outreach event with World Wildlife Fund via ferry system along the Aleutian chain. Stops along the way included Sand Point and Cold Bay. While in Bristol Bay, the Mariculture Director attended the sustainability summit and shared information about current mariculture initiatives in Southwest Alaska. There are current mariculture leases in Adak but many complaints around the red tape of permitting.

Melissa Shawnweather introduced herself as the new Executive Director at Kodiak Economic Development Corporation. KEDC is looking forward to building a business plan and processing facility.

SEC- Mckinley Research economic feasibility study- Highlights of the presentation included that oyster productivity was down in 2024. Hawaii is the source of all oyster seed supply in Alaska. Seaweed harvest had a significant decline in 2024. This data was sourced from a questionnaire published by Mckinley Research Group. There were 20 responses from aquatic farmers/ hatchery operators and 14 additional interviews. This project will continue for the next three years and will include an annual memo, available to the public on the AMC website.

Workforce Development

UAF- UAF hosted many virtual events in the last quarter, including webinars about oyster industry knowledge exchanges. UAF hosted (with SWAMC, focused on education) the first annual Kodiak Kelp Festival with 300 participants. The Kelp Farming manual is almost completed (due winter of 2024). UAF's new Alaska Sea Grant fellow is working on the Oyster Farming manual with the recently hired shellfish mariculture specialist. Online training for oyster growth will be conducted in early November. Seaweed handling and processing workshop will be held in May of 2025. The Mariculture Research and Training Center website is frequently updated as well as social media. UAF will soon be opening the call for presenters/ abstracts for the 2025 Alaska Mariculture Conference. To ensure that rural areas have access to these resources, UAF will be engaging with regional communities and liaisons to figure out how to best utilize these tools published on MRTC's website and offer funding for travel to the mariculture conference.

UAS- Full swing in aquaculture semester, with 6 AK resident students and 6 from lower 48 and Canada. UAS partners with "Minorities in Aquaculture" based out of the east coast. One student interned with Blue Stone Oysters and NOAA lab. Skiff operator classes offered. Hired a mariculture program coordinator. Mariculture business marketing course soon to be offered. The wet lab is finally able to do some tumble trials/ studies.

Research and Development

AFDF: Seaweed tissue updates- Seaweed samples were sent to a lab that did an analysis of 40 analytes on 100 samples from 15 different seaweed species. Data will be available next month (November), and comprehensive analysis will be complete by March or April. Included in this budget item is an RFP that will be published in the first week of November to analyze the data and make it usable for the public.

JIP Round 2- Awarded 14 new JIP projects second cohort for \$3.4 million

Green Energy (AFDF)- Kemp has hired a research assistant and is looking to start in-person research in Cordova.

BREAK FOR LUNCH AT 12:21, back at 1pm

Spending Overview (Additional project scopes for BBB funding consideration).

There was discussion on the overall spending to date of the AMC. Within Q2 of 2024 \$1.8 in reimbursements were paid out. Requests were made to track metrics on demographics and location. The BBBRC project goals are to direct investments and opportunities to the benefit of 25% Alaska Natives and an additional 25% toward Underserved Communities. Input from the Governance Body and subcommittee toward scopes of work that are deemed important and not funded will be gladly received for consideration within each of the 7 project budgets.

AMC Website & Comms Update

The new AMC website was presented, highlighting the newly added JIP project summaries and RFP resource page. The seaweed & oysters insights platform was presented to the Governance Body, this is recognized as a great resource for the liaisons.

Alaska Mariculture Insights Platform

Showcasing the platform and how it has synthesized efforts around the state into a singular media platform. Governance body feedback suggests having outreach events in each region in order to broadcast this resource. Requests around including a map within this. There were requests made around including more GIS and mapping efforts for outreach and communication efforts regarding mariculture statewide.

Discussion around the communication plan and how to implement it. AMA is still working with RTC to finalize the communication plan. The draft plan was made public (May of 2024) but not adopted. AMA plans to bring together entities to discuss finalizing the statewide communications plan. The Governance Body expressed interest in seeing the final draft of the communications plan.

Market Development – *Food for Climate league (contractor)* – deliverables discussed, which included a presentation and report, labelled as a “marketing roadmap”. *Economic Research contract (McKinley Research; contractor)*- Progress on this project included hosting a webinar, and a stakeholder committee meeting, (any GB Member who is interested in marketing efforts are welcome to attend). EDA has recently approved \$1.3 million to be moved to the marketing budget (increasing the marketing budget from \$600,000 to \$1.8 million). This will aid businesses that have products to sell.

The Market Research deliverable is almost complete under the Food for Climate League contract. Discussions around a new round of RFPs to go out soon to address developing markets and advertising products.

Equipment and technology – The second round of the equipment RFP will be postponed until the beginning of 2025. DEC has purchased their lab equipment which will modernize their methodology (no more testing with live mice) and hopefully reduce operating costs.

Shirley Kelly- the reason EDA provided this investment to SEC, is for AK to be involved in the global arena for mariculture. Mariculture can help bridge the gap that is growing within the fishing industry with multiple fishery disasters. It is imperative to include regions that are hurting the most and keep the mindset to compete in the world market.

Event recap - Seagriculture (September 11-12) was well attended, highlighting the potential for Alaska as a global contender in the mariculture sector and showcase the common challenges of market development, products creation, and processing of products in order to get them to market. Upcoming events include the Alaska Mariculture Conference: Feb 18-20, 2025 in Sitka. And EDA is hosting an event in Washington DC in December of 2024. The event involved technology hubs and the National Science Foundation. Excitement was expressed for the growth of the mariculture industry.

There was no public comment.

The next Governance Body meeting will be on January 15th

The meeting was adjourned 2:54 PM



Request for Proposals

RFP #: 2024-05

Date of Issue: November 6, 2024

Scientific Consulting Related to Seaweed Tissue Analysis Project

The Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) is soliciting proposals from individuals, companies, organizations, or research institutions to conduct an analysis and compile a report analyzing lab data produced through the Alaska Mariculture Cluster Seaweed Tissue Analysis project. In May-June of 2024 a sampling effort in Kodiak and Sitka collected samples of approximately 15 species of wild and farmed seaweed over three sequential sampling efforts. Samples underwent a range of analyses to develop nutritional profiles, and characterize and measure carbohydrates and other valuable compounds. Further analysis and synthesis of these results is needed to provide usable information for the Alaska mariculture industry as well as to inform another year of sampling and testing.

Background

The Seaweed Tissue Analysis project is a part of the Research and Development component of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC), a coalition funded by a U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) grant (project number 07-79-07901). A Governance Body guides the work and equity metrics of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster. AFDF is a part of the coalition and one of the subaward recipients. As part of its subaward, AFDF oversees a portion of the Research and Development component, and in particular, the Seaweed Tissue Analysis Project. The Research and Development component is one of seven components, which have been purposely designed to be complementary in order to break down barriers to growth, and break out of the “chicken or egg” cycle of industry development. More information on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster is available at alaskamariculturecluster.org, including the [Overarching Narrative](#) which explains how the seven components work together to grow the mariculture industry in an equitable and environmentally responsible manner, and the [Research and Development Component](#).

About AFDF

Since 1978, the AFDF has broadly represented the Alaska seafood industry (harvesters, processors and support service businesses) in the areas of research and development. AFDF

has previous experience with projects similar to the Scientific Consulting Related to Seaweed Tissue Analysis project. Since 2014, AFDF has spearheaded the Alaska Mariculture Initiative, an effort to expedite the development of growing shellfish and seaweed in Alaska. As a result of those efforts, Governor Walker created the Mariculture Task Force (MTF) by Administrative Order from 2016-2021, during which time the former AFDF Executive Director served as either Chair or Vice-Chair. The MTF was designed to sunset and in its place has been created the Alaska Mariculture Alliance (AMA) of which AFDF is a member.

Eligible Entities

Applicants must have or acquire an UEI and be registered through SAM.gov prior to award finalization. Applicants, including any subcontractors, must not be debarred from receiving federal funds. Applicants also need an Alaska business license before commencing the work.

Scope of Work and Deliverables

There are approximately 100 total samples over a spread of approximately 15 species of seaweed, with approximately 40 analyses conducted on each sample. While the lab will provide some analysis summary, further research and summary is needed to best characterize and disseminate the laboratory results.

The contractor will be responsible for:

- Task 1: Create species profiles.
 - Compile testing data provided by Celignus into profiles for each species covering all analytes (confirm all analytes are relevant and reliable in collaboration with AFDF).
 - Work with AFDF to determine how to address variations in season and locations of samples and species. Our goal is to emphasize distinct differences while minimizing complexity, making the information accessible to non-specialized audiences.

Deliverable: Set of 15 profiles for each species with testing data.

Timeline: End of January 2025.

Note: All raw data will be publicly available.

- Task 2: Complete a comparative analysis.
 - Surface key findings through analysis and comparison across market needs and existing research on composition of comparable seaweeds.
 - Collect, review and compare outside literature and data sets to ensure our test results are consistent (or offer possible explanations for where they are not consistent with other analyses). This analysis should include consideration of the impact of differences in extraction/testing methodologies, such as for carbohydrate data.

NOTE: Farmers and processors in Alaska are particularly interested in knowing which species are most promising for commercialization. While a thorough examination of farming feasibility, processing challenges, and other Alaska-specific barriers is beyond the project's scope, some attention to these issues is essential.

See original scope of analysis included in the RFP [here](#) for reference.

Deliverables:

- Written report with executive summary and comparative review of each species highlighting notable findings from the test results.
- Outreach materials that include a simple overview of key findings intended to be valuable for non-experts and industry partners. These may be designed with input from Southeast Conference and AFDF teams to inform best communication methods for intended use.
- Virtual presentation of findings at a mutually agreed upon forum.

Timeline: End of March 2025

- Task 3: Provide recommendations to inform successive year of seaweed tissue analysis sampling and testing to be conducted in Spring and Summer 2025.
 - Work with AFDF to plan and conduct interviews, workshops, or other tools to gather feedback and comments from Alaska seaweed industry stakeholders related to seaweed tissue analysis priorities, including the most promising markets and their needs for seaweed tissue analysis data.
 - Develop a set of recommendations and considerations as AFDF and SEC prioritize the remaining funds to support seaweed tissue sampling and testing. Recommendations could include: a priority list of species for follow up research based on initial findings and market potential; recommendations on additional sampling efforts, analytes, or testing methodologies to pursue to resolve key questions arising from the 2024 data; sampling strategies to address regional or seasonal variation; and/or other similar recommendations.

Deliverable: Memo providing recommendations to inform AFDF's 2025 seaweed tissue analysis efforts.

Timeline: End of March 2025.

- Task 4: Ongoing Consultation
 - Provide follow up consultation to support AFDF's 2025 seaweed tissue analysis project activities.

Deliverable: 40 hours of consultation services, such as meeting with AFDF, providing written feedback via email, participation in additional outreach meetings, and other related services.

Timeline: Hours will be expended through Fall 2025.

NOTE: Proposers are encouraged to suggest additional or alternative tasks or deliverables that would benefit the project based on their professional expertise.

AFDF reserves the right to negotiate project details with the successful bidder to achieve a contract that fully meets AMC's desired outcomes. All products produced under this RFP will become publicly available on completion.

Funding Available

Projects are expected to be in the \$30,000 to \$45,000 range, though proposals will be considered at higher amounts. If the need for additional related services arises, additional scope and budget may be added to this contract on mutual agreement (such as potential for analysis of results of testing conducted in 2025).

Restrictions on Funds

Funding is not eligible to be used for infrastructure, including construction, real property or improvements to real property. Funding cannot be used to purchase equipment. "Equipment" means purchases of single units with a total purchase price, delivered, in excess of \$5,000.00. If a proposal is contingent upon purchasing equipment, please contact Alex Huller (ahuller@afdf.org) in advance of submission. Exceptions to the no equipment rule may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Insurance Requirements

Funding of projects will be contingent upon providing proof of required insurance policies for project activities, which may include: 1) commercial general liability insurance, with property damage; 2) protection and indemnity insurance, with limits of not less than one million dollars per event; 3) professional liability insurance; and/or 4) workers compensation insurance.

Alaska Business License Requirements

Per AS 43.70.020(a) a business license is required for the privilege of engaging in a business in the State of Alaska. Per AS 43.70.110(1) "Business" means a for-profit or non-profit entity engaging or offering to engage in a trade, a service, a profession, or an activity with the goal of receiving a financial benefit in exchange for the provision of services, or goods, or other property. If selected for funding under this RFP, an Alaska Business License will be required. See <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/BusinessLicensing/BusinessLicensingFAQs.aspx>

Proposal Content Requirements

The proposal must consist of the following (maximum 5 pages):

1. **Introduction and Understanding of the Project:** Include the RFP title, discussion of project context and importance, and an overview of the project team and

approach.

2. **Methodology:** Discuss proposed approach to accomplishing the scope of work listed, including proposed deliverables and timeline. Consultants may include additional recommendations that would benefit the project based on their professional expertise.
3. **Experience and Qualifications:** Describe relevant experience of the entity and key team member(s), including relevant education or professional experience as it relates to chemical analysis of seaweeds, and understanding the development of products for market.
4. **Budget:** Provide a list of the key individuals/subcontractors expected to work on the project, the fully loaded rates charged per individual, any estimated expenses, and total estimated project cost. ****DOWNLOAD REQUIRED BUDGET TEMPLATE [HERE](#)****

Scoring Criteria

Scoring of each proposal against the criteria listed below will be with recommendations and final approval made in cooperation with the lead entity, Southeast Conference. Criteria and maximum potential scores for selecting proposals are as follows:

- Experience and knowledge of Alaska mariculture and existing & emerging seaweed markets. (40 points)
- Past experience with similar projects. (30 points)
- Demonstration of capacity to complete deliverables within a reasonable timeline. (15 points)
- The competitiveness of cost relative to other proposals. (15 points)

Right to Refusal: AFDF reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received.

Due Date: Proposals must be submitted via email no later than December 1st to ahuller@afdf.org.

- Proposals received after the deadline may be considered but only if they can be accommodated by AFDF's review process. Additional information provided after the deadline may also be considered but only if such information can be accommodated by the review process.

For questions, please call or email Alex Huller at ahuller@afdf.org (513)317-7947.



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www.alaskamariculturecluster.org

Scientific Consulting Services Related to Heavy Metals and Kelp

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS RFP #2024-03

EDA Project Number 07-79-07904

Date of Issue: 5/22/24

Proposals Due: 7/15/24

Summary

Southeast Conference is soliciting proposals from qualified entities to advise on topics related to heavy metal levels in kelp. Specifically, this RFP will fund development of a sampling and analysis plan for kelp grown in Alaska and in the North Atlantic for production into products for purposes of evaluating the naturally occurring background levels of lead and cadmium. SEC and partners will separately fund and perform sampling and provide a dataset to the contractor to analyze the results and support a petition to California's OEHHA to develop naturally occurring exemption levels for lead and cadmium in kelp.

Background

Southeast Conference – the state and federally recognized economic development organization for Southeast Alaska – is the lead institution administering a federal grant from the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) to grow Alaska's mariculture industry through the Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) program. The Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) grant coalition includes a diverse group of stakeholders including Alaska state regulatory agencies, Alaska's university system, Economic Development Districts, trade organizations, and others. A Governance Body, composed of AMC coalition leads as well as Tribal representatives from each of the project regions, guides the work and equity metrics of the overall grant. The Alaska Mariculture Cluster has an overall equity goal of 25% of

AMC program impacts and investments going to rural underserved communities and 25% to Alaska Native entities and individuals.

The AMC grant is composed of seven component projects (listed below), which have been purposely designed to be complementary to address barriers to growth and break out of the “chicken or egg” cycle of industry development:

- Revolving Loan Fund
- Governance, Coordination and Outreach
- Workforce Development
- Research and Development
- Market Development
- Green Energy
- Equipment and Technology

The full project period for the AMC BBBRC project is October 1, 2022 – September 30th, 2026. More information on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) is available at www.alaskamariculturecluster.org, including the Overarching Narrative, which explains how the seven components work together to grow the mariculture industry in an equitable and environmentally responsible manner.

Related AMC Projects

The AMC marketing component project – of which this research is a part – funds market research and marketing programs to support increasing demand for products made with Alaska kelp and oysters. A roughly \$300,000 market research contract is currently underway led by Food for Climate League.

The AMC grant includes over \$800,000 in seaweed tissue analysis, as part of the R&D component project. The first phase of the seaweed tissue analysis project is underway, led by the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF). AFDF advertised an [RFP for up to \\$400K in lab services](#) and is currently collecting samples. This project will include collection and analysis of data on heavy metals in Alaska kelp as part of a broader scope. Lab results from the 2024 sampling are expected to be available by the end of October 2024. Priorities and plans for use of the remaining funds for seaweed tissue analysis will be developed after analysis of 2024 results as well as the results on the Task 1 study funded in the RFP.

Scope of Work

The scope of work includes three tasks described below. Separate but related SEC-funded work is listed as well for clarity.

Contractor Task 1: Sampling Plan Design

- Design a sampling plan for kelp grown in Alaska and in the North Atlantic and intended to be sold in California for purposes of evaluating the naturally occurring background levels of lead and cadmium. Plan should consider available data and research and help prioritize future investments in seaweed tissue analysis sampling.
- **Deliverable.** Technical memorandum that outlines the assumptions and calculations used to develop the sampling plan and the proposed design including sample size calculations.
- **Schedule.** Work to be completed by February 15, 2025.

SEC Task: Sampling and Testing

- As part of other kelp sampling plans within Alaska Mariculture Cluster work, SEC and partners will, separate from this contract, fund and perform sampling guided by task 1 work products and provide data to the contractor for analysis and reporting in task 2.
- **Schedule.** Data from 2025 sampling will be available by the end of October 2025.

Contractor Task 2: Data Analysis and Report

- Contractor will analyze available data (provided by SEC and partners) and develop a report summarizing findings related to the naturally occurring background levels of lead and cadmium. The report be used to support a petition to California's OEHHA to develop naturally occurring exemption levels for these two chemicals in kelp.
- **Deliverable.** Data analysis and report.
- **Schedule.** Work will be completed by February 15, 2026.

Contractor Task 3. Consulting

- SEC anticipated a need for contractor to answer questions and provide follow up analyses related to the work completed in Task 1 and 3 and otherwise provide support for the goals described in this RFP. Subject to availability and budget, these engagements may involve email responses, providing feedback on documents drafted by AMC coalition members, participation in meetings outside the scope of Tasks 1 or 2, or other similar activities.

Funding Available

Funding is secured through the federally funded Alaska Mariculture Cluster grant, with \$75,000 to \$100,000 budgeted for this RFP though proposals outside that range will be considered. If the need for additional related services arises, additional scope and budget may be added to this contract on mutual agreement.

General Requirements

Single Point of Contact. The consultant will designate one person as the project manager and point of contact with SEC. In the case of multiple investigators/contractors, one shall be designated as the lead to serve as the project manager and point of contact. Any change of lead personnel shall be reported to SEC within 7 days.

Disbarment. Applicants must have or acquire a UEI and be registered through SAM.gov prior to award finalization. Applicants, including any subcontractors, must not be disbarred from receiving federal funds.

Public Information. All products produced under this RFP will become the property of SEC.

Proposal Contents

Proposals are expected to be no more than 6 pages in length, excluding resumes which may be attached.

Proposals should include the following components:

- **Introduction and Understanding of the Project.** Include the RFP title, discussion of project context and importance, and an overview of the project team and approach.
- **Methodology.** Discuss proposed approach to accomplishing the scope of work listed, including proposed deliverables and timeline. Consultants may include additional recommendations that would benefit the project based on their professional expertise.
- **Experience and Qualifications.** Describe relevant experience of the firm and key team members, including knowledge of chemical analysis pertinent to this project and familiarity with California's Proposition 65 regulatory compliance and petitioning.
- **Price.** Provide a list of the key individuals/subcontractors expected to work on project, the fully loaded rates charged per individual, any estimated expenses, and total estimated project cost.

Proposal Submission Process

Deadline. Submit proposals in pdf format by 7/15/2024 via email to procurement officer Alan Sorum at alan@seconference.org and project manager Dan Lesh at dan@seconference.org.

- Proposers are encouraged to verify with the procurement officer that the proposal has been received prior to the deadline.
- Additional information provided after the deadline may also be considered but only if such information can be accommodated by the review process.

Public Information: Proposals and work plans may be distributed throughout the organization for review and comment. Proprietary information should not be submitted in any proposal. SEC will not knowingly reveal the contents of a proposal that is not subsequently accepted for contract; however, SEC accepts no liability should such contents inadvertently be revealed to third parties.

Changes. Any changes or addendum will be posted on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster website and sent directly to respondents who have specifically requested notification.

Preparation Costs. SEC is not liable for any costs incurred by the proposer for proposal preparation.

Questions. Inquiries regarding this request for qualifications shall be directed to procurement officer Alan Sorum at alan@seconference.org and project manager Dan Lesh at dan@seconference.org.

Evaluation Criteria and Award Process

Criteria for evaluating proposals is as follows:

- Past experience on relevant or similar projects (40%)
- Demonstration of capacity to complete deliverables within a reasonable timeline (20%)
- The competitiveness of cost relative to other proposals (30%)

Scoring of each proposal against the criteria listed above will be conducted by an RFP review committee. SEC reserves the right to reject any and all of the proposals received. If necessary, SEC may select the proposals that, in its sole view, most nearly conform to its needs as outlined in this RFP and then negotiate directly with that proposer to refine the proposal to achieve a contract that fully satisfies SEC needs.

A notice of intent to award is expected to be announced by 7/31/2024.

About Southeast Conference

As the state and federally designated regional economic development organization for Southeast Alaska, Southeast Conference serves as the collective voice for advancing the region's economy. Southeast Conference has over 200 member organizations representing 1,200 people from 32 regional communities and 19 Tribes. The mission of Southeast Conference is to undertake and support activities that promote strong economies, healthy communities, and a quality environment in Southeast Alaska. Southeast Conference formed in 1958 with a group of people supporting the establishment of a regional transportation system in Southeast Alaska, which led to the formation of the Alaska Marine Highway System. After that success Southeast Conference stayed together through more than a half-century to focus on concerns unique to the region, including transportation, maritime, tourism, seafood, natural resources, health care, government, and overall quality of life.



Request for Proposals
RFP No. 2024-01
Date of Issue: October 15, 2024
Alaska Mariculture Alliance, Inc.

Communication, Connection and Coordination Services

The Alaska Mariculture Alliance, Inc. is soliciting proposals from organizations within Southeast Alaska to host dedicated positions to provide communication, connection, and coordination services to underserved, rural, and Alaska Native communities (Mariculture Liaisons). Mariculture Liaisons will facilitate access to resources within the Alaska Mariculture Cluster Build Back Regional Challenge grant (BBBRC) and generally support mariculture development efforts that meet local and regional priorities.

This project is a vital element within the Governance, Coordination & Outreach component of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) BBBRC grant. The Alaska Mariculture Alliance (AMA), as part of its subaward from the AMC, will oversee the project. More information on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster and the BBBRC grant is available at alaskamariculturecluster.org.

The AMA currently funds four Mariculture Liaisons, with one focused on each of the AMC regions – Prince William Sound, Kenai Peninsula, and Southwest Alaska (Kodiak & Aleutian Chain). This RFP is soliciting proposals from organizations within Southeast Alaska.

Funding is secured for these positions for the life of the BBBRC grant. Selected proposals will fund one year of work with the possibility of annual renewals, subject to performance. Annual funding of \$90,000 is budgeted for each position (includes travel, supplies, salary, benefits, and all other needed expenses). Preferably, one dedicated full-time person will fill each position, though organizations can propose other arrangements that meet the scope of work and provide the same level of dedicated capacity.

SCOPE OF WORK

Task I – Communication, Connection, and Coordination

- a. Mariculture Liaisons will establish or integrate into existing platforms for effective networking and communications within regional rural and Alaska Native communities.
- b. Mariculture Liaisons will assist rural and Alaska Native community residents, businesses, and organizations with accessing mariculture resources that include, but are not limited to, the BBBRC grant. The Contractor will support the AMC BBBRC grant’s overall equity engagement goal of seeing 25% of resources benefitting rural communities and 25% benefitting Alaska Native communities.
- c. Successful communication efforts will also help communities have influence over and participate in mariculture management and development decisions affecting their region.
- d. Guided by local priorities and partners, the Mariculture Liaisons will support the incorporation of traditional knowledge, subsistence methods, regenerative economics, and local food movements into the development of mariculture in the region.



Task II – Support mariculture development within rural and indigenous communities

- a. Mariculture Liaisons will work directly with current and prospective aquatic farmers and industry participants to assist in business and project development, such as permitting and designing aquatic farms, facilitating mariculture research and development, writing grant applications, responding to RFPs, and other similar work.

DELIVERABLES

- a. Plan and design culturally appropriate listening sessions, workshops, and presentations for the purpose of sharing information about and collecting input on local mariculture priorities.
- b. Meet with all interested tribes, native corporations, and rural or Alaska Native communities to share information and collect input on local mariculture priorities.
- c. Conduct at least four in-person, community-wide meetings each year for the life of the BBBRC grant contract. These meetings will occur in distinct locations within the assigned region with all interested tribes, native corporations, and rural or Alaska Native communities.
- d. Provide regular opportunities for members of the mariculture industry to participate in and attend regional mariculture events and annual statewide convening of funded positions.
- e. Collaborate with other stakeholders, such as state and federal agencies and nonprofits, to conduct outreach to local Alaska Native and rural communities.
- f. Participate in weekly meetings with the AMA.
- g. Provide quarterly summaries of activities and impacts to the AMA.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EVALUATION

Responsive applications must demonstrate the following required qualifications:

- a. Experience working with rural and Alaska Native communities;
- b. Experience collaborating on projects involving economic, community, tribal, or natural resources development; and
- c. Experience working within a network of organizations that have varying goals and practices while finding common-ground solutions and building collaborative partnerships.

Preferred qualifications:

- a. Familiarity with aquatic farming, hatchery/nursery operations, and other aspects of Alaska's mariculture industry; and
- b. Familiarity with coastal resource management and working waterfronts.



SECTION ONE INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

1.01 Return Mailing Address, Contact Person, Telephone, and Deadline for Receipt of Proposals

All proposals shall be submitted by email to: info@alaskamariculture.org

Proposals must be received by no later than 5:00 pm Alaska Time on November 15, 2024. The AMA's review committee will consider all proposals received by the deadline. Proposals may be accepted until a contractor is selected.

It is the offeror's responsibility to email the issuing agency at info@alaskamariculture.org to confirm that the proposal has been received. The AMA is not responsible for unreadable, corrupt, or missing attachments.

Any changes or addenda will be posted on the AMA website (alaskamariculture.org) and sent directly to respondents who have specifically requested notification.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THIS RFP MUST BE DIRECTED TO THE PROCUREMENT OFFICER:

Jason Lessard
(907) 351-2575
info@alaskamariculture.org

1.02 Contract Term and Work Schedule

The contract term and work schedule set out herein represents the AMA's best estimate of the schedule. If a component of this schedule, such as the deadline for receipt of proposals, is delayed, the rest of the schedule may be shifted by the same number of days at the discretion of the AMA.

The length of the contract will be one-year from the date of award. Deliverables will be scheduled per contract terms, with project completion estimated for February 2026, with the possibility of three additional annual renewals, subject to mutual agreement and performance.

Unless otherwise provided in this RFP, the AMA and the successful offeror/contractor(s) agree: (1) that any holding over of the contract excluding any exercised renewal options, will be considered as a month-to-month extension, and all other terms and conditions shall remain in full force and effect; and (2) to provide written notice to the other party of the intent to cancel such month-to-month extension at least 30-days before the desired date of cancellation.

The proposed contract schedule is as follows.

- Issue RFP: October 15, 2024
- Deadline for Receipt of Initial Proposals: November 15, 2024
- Notice of Intent to Award: November 27, 2024
- Date of Award (AMA issues contract): December 11, 2024



1.03 Budget

This RFP is intended to result in the award of four separate service contracts, each relating to a distinct region, as defined in this proposal. Each contract shall not exceed \$90,000.

1.04 Location of Work and Travel

The project will be managed by the Alaska Mariculture Alliance. Mariculture Liaisons will be based in the region they serve. Regular communications and meetings (virtual and in-person) will be required for a successful project.

To perform outreach, Mariculture Liaisons will be required to frequently travel to communities within their assigned regions. Travel to AMA's annual business meetings may also be necessary.

1.05 Assistance to Offerors with a Disability

Offerors with a disability may receive accommodation regarding the means of communicating this RFP or participating in the procurement process. For more information, contact the procurement officer.

1.06 Questions Received Prior to the Deadline for Receipt of Proposals

Questions should be directed to AMA's procurement officer. Two types of questions generally arise. One may be answered by directing the questioner to a specific section of the RFP. These questions may be answered over the telephone. Other questions may be more complex and may require a written amendment to the RFP. The procurement officer will make that decision.

1.07 Amendments

If an amendment is issued, it will be provided to all who were provided a copy of the RFP as well as those who have registered through email with the procurement officer after receiving the RFP from the AMA website.

1.08 Alternate Proposals

Offerors may submit only one proposal for evaluation.

1.09 Right of Rejection

Offerors must comply with all the terms of the RFP. The procurement officer may reject any proposal that does not comply with all the material and substantial terms, conditions, and performance requirements of the RFP.

Minor informalities that do not affect responsiveness may be waived by the procurement officer. The AMA reserves the right to refrain from making an award.

1.10 AMA is Not Responsible for Preparation Costs

The AMA will not pay any cost associated with the preparation, submittal, presentation, or evaluation of any proposal.



1.11 Subcontractors

The AMA prefers that all Mariculture Liaisons be employees of the offeror. If an offeror intends to use subcontractors, the offeror must identify in the proposal the names of the subcontractors and the portions of the work the subcontractors will perform.

If a proposal with subcontractors is selected, the offeror must provide the following information concerning each prospective subcontractor within five working days from the date of request:

- a. complete name of the subcontractor;
- b. complete address of the subcontractor;
- c. type of work the subcontractor will be performing;
- d. percentage of work the subcontractor will be providing;
- e. evidence that the subcontractor holds a valid Alaska business license; and
- f. a written statement, signed by each proposed subcontractor that clearly verifies that the subcontractor is committed to render the services required by the contract.

An offeror's failure to provide this information, within the time set, may cause the AMA to consider the proposal non-responsive and reject it. The substitution of one subcontractor for another may be made only at the discretion and with the prior written approval of the AMA.

1.13 Offeror's Certification

By signature on the proposal, offerors certify that they comply with the following:

- a. all terms and conditions set out in this RFP;
- b. all applicable state and federal laws, including:
 - i. the Equal Employment Opportunity Act and its implementing regulations;
 - ii. the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its implementing regulations; and
 - iii. the applicable portion of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- c. a condition that the proposal submitted was independently arrived at, without collusion, under penalty of perjury; and
- d. that the offers will remain open and valid for at least 30 days.

If any offeror fails to comply with [a] through [d] of this paragraph, the AMA reserves the right to disregard the proposal, terminate the contract, or consider the contractor in default.

1.14 Conflict of Interest

Each proposal shall include a statement indicating whether the firm or any individual working on the contract has a possible conflict of interest and, if so, the nature of that conflict. The AMA reserves the right to consider a proposal non-responsive and reject it or cancel the award if any interest disclosed or undisclosed could either give the appearance of a conflict or cause speculation as to the objectivity of the program to be developed by the offeror. The AMA's determination regarding any questions of conflict of interest shall be final.

1.15 News Releases

News releases related to this RFP will not be made without prior approval of the AMA.



1.16 Assignment

The contractor may not transfer or assign any portion of the contract without prior written approval from the procurement officer.

1.17 Disputes & Severability

Disputes: The Parties agree to enter into good faith negotiations to resolve any disputes that arise out of or relate to this Agreement. If such a dispute cannot be settled through negotiation, the Parties agree first to try in good faith to settle the dispute by non-binding mediation. Any and all litigation shall be filed in Alaska Superior Court, in Anchorage, Alaska.

Severability: If any provision of the contract or agreement is declared by a court to be illegal or in conflict with any law, the validity of the remaining terms and provisions will not be affected and the rights and obligations of the parties will be construed and enforced as if the contract did not contain the particular provision held to be invalid.

SECTION TWO STANDARD PROPOSAL INFORMATION

2.01 Authorized Signature

All proposals must be signed by an individual authorized to bind the offeror to the provisions of the RFP. Proposals must remain open and valid for at least 30 days from the date set as the deadline for receipt of proposals.

2.02 Supplemental Terms and Conditions

After award of contract the supplemental term or condition will be considered null and void if:

- a. conflict arises between a supplemental term or condition included in the proposal and a term or condition of the RFP, the term or condition of the RFP will prevail; and
- b. if the AMA's rights would be diminished because of the application of a supplemental term or condition included in the proposal

2.03 Clarification of Offers

To determine if a proposal is compliant and eligible for award, communications by the procurement officer or review committee are permitted with an offeror to clarify uncertainties or eliminate confusion concerning the contents of a proposal. Clarifications may not result in a material or substantive change to the proposal. The evaluation may be adjusted because of a clarification under this section.

2.04 Discussions with Offerors

The AMA may conduct discussions with offerors. The purpose of these discussions will be to ensure a full understanding of the requirements of the RFP and proposal.



Offerors with a disability needing accommodation should contact the procurement officer prior to the date set for discussions so that reasonable accommodation can be made. Any oral modification of a proposal must be reduced to writing by the offeror.

2.05 Evaluation of Proposals

The procurement officer and review committee will evaluate proposals. The evaluation will be based solely on the evaluation factors set out in Section Six of this RFP.

After receipt of proposals, if there is a need for any substantial clarification or material change in the RFP, an amendment will be issued. The amendment will incorporate the clarification or change, and a new date and time established for new or amended proposals. Evaluations may be adjusted as a result of receiving new or amended proposals.

2.06 Vendor Tax ID

A valid Vendor Tax ID must be submitted with the proposal or within five days of the AMA's request.

2.07 Alaska Business License and Other Required Licenses

Offerors must comply with any and all applicable state laws.

2.08 Contract Negotiation

After final evaluation, the procurement officer will negotiate first with the offeror(s) of the highest-ranked proposals. Negotiations, if held, shall be within the scope of the request for proposals and limited to those items which would not have an effect on the ranking of proposals. If the highest-ranked offeror(s) fails to provide necessary information for negotiations in a timely manner, or fails to negotiate in good faith, the AMA may terminate negotiations and negotiate with the offeror of the next highest ranked proposal. If contract negotiations are commenced, they will be held virtually.

2.09 Failure to Negotiate

The AMA may terminate negotiations with the offeror initially selected and commence negotiations with the next highest ranked offeror, if the selected offeror:

- a. fails to provide the information required to begin negotiations in a timely manner;
- b. fails to negotiate in good faith;
- c. indicates they cannot perform the contract within the budgeted funds available for the project; or
- d. if the offeror and the AMA, after a good faith effort, simply cannot come to terms.

2.10 Notice of Intent to Award (NOI) — Offeror Notification of Selection

After the completion of contract negotiation, the procurement officer will issue a written Notice of Intent to Award (NOI). The NOI will identify the proposal selected for award.

2.11 Protest

Offerors have three (3) days from the date of the NOI to protest the award of the Contract. All protests



must be received in writing at the AMA office no later than the close of business on the third day after NOI publication. The AMA will respond within three business days. Protests based on any omission or error, or on the content of the solicitation, will be disallowed if these faults have not been brought to the attention of the procurement officer, in writing, at least seven days before the deadline for receipt of proposals.

SECTION THREE STANDARD CONTRACT INFORMATION

3.01 Contract Type: Fixed Price Contract

This RFP is intended to result in the award of a fixed price contract. The contract may be amended and extended as needed to accomplish the scope of work.

3.02 Contract Approval

This RFP does not, by itself, obligate the AMA to negotiate with any party or award a contract. The AMA's obligation will commence when the contract is approved by the Executive Director of the AMA, as stipulated by the Board of Directors. Upon written notice to the contractor, the AMA may set a different starting date for the contract. The AMA will not be responsible for any work done by the contractor, even work done in good faith, if it occurs prior to the contract start date set by the AMA.

3.03 Standard Contract Provisions

The contractor will be required to sign and submit a Contract Agreement for Professional Services (Contract) provided by the AMA. The contractor must comply with the contract provisions. No alteration of the Contract will be permitted without prior written approval by both parties.

3.04 Proposal as a Part of the Contract

All of this RFP and the successful proposal will be incorporated into the Contract.

3.05 Additional Terms and Conditions

The AMA reserves the right to add terms and conditions during contract negotiations. These terms and conditions will be within the scope of the RFP and will not affect the proposal evaluations. The Contract will be subject to the execution of AMA's subrecipient agreement between the AMA and Southeast Conference (Subrecipient Agreement).

3.06 Insurance Requirements

Offerors are responsible for the health, safety and conduct of their employees and subcontractors and shall hold the AMA, AMA staff, AMA's Board of Directors, and all other parties harmless. Offerors are responsible to supply any and all insurance requirements needed for performance of this work.

3.07 Contract Funding

Through the BBBRC grant, funding is secured for these positions for the life of the BBBRC grant.

3.08 Proposed Payment Procedures

Payments will be made under a negotiated payment schedule. Each billing must consist of an invoice and progress report. No payment will be made until the progress report and invoice has been approved by the AMA. The final payment will not be made until the entire Contract has been completed and approved by the AMA.

3.09 Contract Payment

The AMA will be administering this contract using BBBRC grant funds. Contract payments will be made as provided in the Subaward Agreement. Final award of the Contract shall be subject to the execution of the Subrecipient Agreement.

No payment will be made until the Contract is approved by AMA's Executive Director, as directed by AMA's Board of Directors. Under no conditions will the offeror be owed the payment of any interest charges associated with the cost of the Contract.

3.10 Contract Personnel

Any change of the project team members or subcontractors named in the proposal must be approved, in advance and in writing, by the AMA. Personnel changes that are not approved by the AMA may be grounds to terminate the Contract.

3.11 Inspection & Modification - Reimbursement for Unacceptable Deliverables

The contractor is responsible for the completion of all work set out in the Contract. All work is subject to inspection, evaluation, and approval by the AMA. The AMA may employ all reasonable means to ensure that the work is progressing and being performed in compliance with the Contract. The AMA may instruct the contractor to make corrections or modifications if needed to accomplish the Contract's intent. The contractor will not unreasonably withhold such changes.

Failure of the contractor to perform and complete the Contract may cause the AMA to terminate the Contract. In this event, the AMA may require the contractor to reimburse monies paid (based on the identified portion of unacceptable work received) and may seek associated damages.

3.12 Termination for Default

If the AMA determines that the contractor has refused to perform the work or has failed to perform the work with such diligence as to ensure its timely and accurate completion, the AMA may, by providing written notice to the contractor, terminate the contractor's right to proceed with part or all of the remaining work.

3.13 Contract Changes - Unanticipated Amendments

During this contract, the contractor may be required to perform additional work. That work will be within the general scope of the initial Contract. When additional work is required, the AMA will provide the contractor a written description of the additional work and request the contractor to submit a firm time schedule for accomplishing the additional work and a firm price for the additional work. Cost and pricing



data must be provided to justify the cost of such amendments.

The contractor will not commence additional work until the project director has secured any required AMA approvals necessary for the amendment and issued a written contract amendment, approved by the Executive Director of the AMA.

3.14 Contract Invalidation

If any provision of this Contract is found to be invalid, such invalidation will not be construed to invalidate the entire Contract.

3.15 Nondisclosure and Confidentiality

Contractor agrees that any and all confidential information shall be used only for purposes of providing the deliverables and performing the services specified herein and shall not disseminate or allow dissemination of confidential information except as provided for in this section. The contractor shall hold as confidential and will use reasonable care (including both facility physical security and electronic security) to prevent unauthorized access by, storage, disclosure, publication, dissemination to and/or use by third parties of the confidential information. "Reasonable care" means compliance by the contractor with all applicable federal and state law. The contractor must promptly notify the AMA in writing if it becomes aware of any storage, disclosure, loss, unauthorized access to or use of the confidential information.

Confidential information, as used herein, means any data, files, software, information or materials (whether prepared by the AMA or its agents or advisors) in oral, electronic, tangible or intangible form and however stored, compiled or memorialized that is classified confidential as defined by the AMA classification and categorization guidelines provided by the AMA to the contractor or a contractor agent or otherwise made available to the contractor or a contractor agent in connection with this contract, or acquired, obtained or learned by the contractor or a contractor agent in the performance of this Contract. Examples of confidential information include, but are not limited to: technology infrastructure, architecture, financial data, trade secrets, equipment specifications, user lists, passwords, research data, and technology data (infrastructure, architecture, operating systems, security tools, IP addresses, etc.).

3.16 Indemnification

Contractor shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the AMA from and against any claim of, or liability for the independent acts, errors, and omissions of the Contractor. If there is a claim of, or liability for, a joint negligent act, error or omission of the Contractor or the AMA and, the indemnification, defense and hold harmless obligation of this provision shall be apportioned on a comparative fault basis. In this provision, Contractor and "AMA" include the employees, agents and other contractors who are directly responsible, respectively, to each.

3.17 Deliverables Property of the AMA

Work completed by this contract becomes the sole property of the AMA.



SECTION FOUR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4.01 Background Information

In the summer of 2022, the United States Economic Development Administration awarded a regional growth cluster called the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) a \$49,000,000 grant under the Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC). As a member of the AMC, the AMA provides leadership and coordination across a broad spectrum of stakeholders interested in the development of mariculture (farming of shellfish and aquatic plants) in Alaska. Created in 2021, AMA's mission is to "develop and support a robust and sustainable mariculture industry, producing shellfish and aquatic plants for the long term benefit of Alaska's economy, environment, and communities." Its 117 members include ocean farmers and processors, research institutions, state regulatory entities, economic development authorities, municipalities, environmental organizations, and others interested in mariculture development in Alaska.

The Southeast Conference and the AMA are responsible for implementing the Governance, Coordination & Outreach component of the BBBRC grant.

One objective of the BBBRC grant is to connect with Alaska Native and rural communities to share information about mariculture funding opportunities under the grant and seek input about the development of mariculture in Alaska. The BBBRC grant contemplates achieving this objective through hiring Mariculture Liaisons focused in each of these four regions – Southeast, Prince William Sound, Kenai Peninsula, and Southwest Alaska (Kodiak & Aleutian Chain).

SECTION FIVE PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT

5.01 Proposal Format and Content

The AMA discourages overly lengthy and costly proposals, however, for the AMA to evaluate proposals fairly and completely, offerors must follow the format set out in this RFP and provide all information requested. Proposals are expected to be no more than 10 pages in length, excluding resumes which may be attached.

Offeror's proposal shall encompass all tasks in the Scope of Work.

Proposals should be regional but may include more than one region. However, the Management Plan (see Section 5.05) must identify how the contractor will accomplish the tasks in the Scope of Work for each region, and whether the contractor would assign distinct Mariculture Liaisons to each region.

5.02 Introduction

Proposals must include the complete name and address of the offeror's firm and the name, mailing address, and telephone number of the person the AMA should contact regarding the proposal.

Proposals must confirm that the offeror will comply with all provisions in this RFP. Proposals must be signed by a company officer empowered to bind the company. An offeror's failure to include these items



in the proposals may cause the proposal to be determined to be non-responsive and the proposal may be rejected.

5.03 Understanding of the Project

Offerors must provide narrative statements that illustrate their understanding of the requirements of the project and the project schedule.

5.04 Methodology Used for the Project

Offerors must provide narrative statements that set out the methodology they intend to employ and illustrate how the methodology will serve to accomplish the work and project schedule.

5.05 Management Plan for the Project

Offerors must provide statements that set out the management plan they intend to follow and illustrate how the plan will serve to accomplish the work and schedule.

5.06 Experience and Qualifications

Offerors must designate the individual(s) responsible and accountable for the completion of each component and deliverable of the RFP.

Where applicable, offerors must identify the person(s) who will act at the Mariculture Liaison and provide the following information about that person(s): title and previous related experience (formal resumes are optional).

Offerors must provide reference names for similar projects the offeror's firm has completed.

5.07 Cost Proposal

Cost proposals must include an itemized budget for the Mariculture Liaison position, including salary, benefits, travel, supplies, and all other compensation.

Contractor will outline the expected number of hours and costs associated with each task.

5.08 Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be reviewed to determine if they are responsive. Proposals determined to be responsive will be evaluated using the criterion that is set out in Section Six.

An evaluation may not be based on discrimination due to the race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, sexual-orientation, age, marital status, pregnancy, parenthood, disability, or political affiliation of the offeror.



SECTION SIX EVALUATION CRITERIA AND CONTRACTOR SELECTION

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS USED TO SCORE THIS PROPOSAL IS 100

6.01 Understanding of the Project (20 Percent)

Proposals will be evaluated against the questions set out below:

- a. How well has the offeror demonstrated a thorough understanding of the purpose and scope of the project?
- b. How well has the offeror identified pertinent issues and potential problems related to the project?
- c. To what degree has the offeror demonstrated an understanding of the deliverables the AMA expects it to provide?
- d. Has the offeror demonstrated an understanding of the AMA's time schedule and can meet it?

6.02 Methodology Used for the Project (25 Percent)

Proposals will be evaluated against the questions set out below:

- a. How comprehensive is the methodology and does it depict a logical approach to fulfilling the requirements of the RFP?
- b. How well does the methodology match and achieve the objectives set out in the RFP?
- c. Does the methodology interface with the time schedule in the RFP?
- d. How well does the management plan support all of the project requirements and logically lead to the deliverables required in the RFP?

6.03 Cost (15 Percent)

Proposals will be evaluated against the questions set out below:

- a. How competitive is the fixed price for the services offered?
- b. How are overall budget objectives met through each task?

6.04 Experience and Qualifications (40 Percent)

Proposals will be evaluated against the questions set out below:

Personnel questions:

- a. Do the individuals assigned to the project have experience working closely with Alaska Native and rural Alaskan communities?
- b. Is the description of prior experience complete and does it demonstrate backgrounds that would be desirable for individual(s) engaged as the Mariculture Liaison?
- c. How extensive is the applicable education and experience of the personnel designated to work on the project?



Firm questions:

- d. How well has the firm demonstrated experience in completing similar projects on time and within budget?
- e. How successful is the general history of the firm regarding timely and successful completion of projects?
- f. Has the firm provided letters of reference from previous clients?
- g. If a subcontractor will perform work on the contract, how well do they measure up to the evaluation used for the offeror?
- h. Has the firm demonstrated the ability to increase access for Alaska Natives and/or rural Alaskan communities to participate in similar industries, such as fishing or agriculture?
- i. Has the firm demonstrated the ability to share information and conduct listening sessions with Alaska Native and rural Alaskan communities in a culturally sensitive manner?



9360 Glacier Hwy, Ste 201
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 586-4360
www.seconference.org
www.alaskamariculturecluster.org

Other Mariculture Species R&D Round II

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS RFP #2024-05

EDA Project Number 07-79-0794

Date of Issue: September 10, 2024

Updated November 21, 2024 – *Eligible Entities Section Removed*

Updated December 4, 2024 – *Deadline Extended*

Closes: Tuesday, December ~~10~~ 17, 2024 at 5pm AKST

Summary

Southeast Conference is soliciting proposals from individuals, companies, or organizations, as part of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) program, to conduct applied research and development projects around methods for cultivating new mariculture species.

Mariculture farming in Alaska is currently dominated by Pacific Oysters and three species of kelp (sugar, ribbon, and bull). The Alaska Mariculture Cluster grant program has a primary focus on supporting the viability of these species that dominate the current industry. In the long term, it is likely that other species of macroalgae, shellfish, and other mariculture species will be important parts of the industry as well. This RFP is focused on innovation related to other species of interest for cultivation (not including Pacific Oysters, bull kelp, sugar kelp, or ribbon kelp). This RFP will not accept proposals around the cultivation of black seaweed.

Proposals are sought for research and development projects that advance our understanding of key questions related to the viability of “other species” for commercial, restoration, and/or enhancement

uses, including enhancement of subsistence resources.

Proposals should demonstrate support from local or regional tribal leadership and include a plan to engage with local Alaska Native entities to ensure the results of the proposed project will benefit, respect, and represent the values of the local Alaska Native community.

Background

Southeast Conference – the state and federally recognized economic development organization for Southeast Alaska – is the lead institution administering a federal grant from the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) to grow Alaska’s mariculture industry through the Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) program. The Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) grant coalition includes a diverse group of stakeholders including Alaska state regulatory agencies, Alaska’s university system, Economic Development Districts, trade organizations, and more. A Governance Body, composed of AMC coalition leads as well as Tribal representatives from each of the project regions, guides the work and equity metrics of the overall grant. The Alaska Mariculture Cluster has an overall equity goal that applies to all projects. Specifically, 25% of AMC program impacts and investments are targeted to rural underserved communities and 25% to Alaska Native entities and individuals.

The AMC grant is composed of seven component projects (listed below), which have been purposely designed to be complementary to address barriers to growth and break out of the “chicken or egg” cycle of industry development:

- Revolving Loan Fund
- Governance, Coordination and Outreach
- Workforce Development
- Research and Development
- Market Development
- Green Energy
- Equipment and Technology

The full project period for the AMC BBBRC project is October 1, 2022 – September 30th, 2026. More information on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) is available at www.alaskamariculturecluster.org, including the Overarching Narrative, which explains how the seven components work together to grow the mariculture industry in an equitable and environmentally responsible manner.

Related AMC Projects

This RFP is the second from Southeast Conference funding research on new mariculture species. Applicants are encouraged to consider ways to collaborate or build on what has been learned or is underway. Five proposals were funded (each \$85,000-150,000) from the first RFP:

- Chugach Regional Resources Commission: Culturing the basket cockle *Clinocardium nuttallii* utilizing suspended culture
- Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute: Control of farmed *Eualaria fistulosa* and *Hedophyllum nigripes* sporophyte density via novel alternate techniques
- University of Alaska Fairbanks: Protocols for transitioning Pinto Abalone from lab nurseries to ocean-farmed growth systems
- University of Alaska Fairbanks: Manual and economic analysis for the cultivation of Dulse (*Devaleraea mollis*) in Alaska
- University of Alaska Fairbanks: Methodologies for farming Green Sea Urchins in Alaska

Scope of Work

The Alaska Mariculture Cluster program has a primary focus on Pacific Oysters and three species of kelp: sugar, ribbon and bull kelp. This RFP is focused on innovation related to other species of interest for cultivation.

Eligible project categories under this RFP include:

- Innovations in cultivating mariculture species (not including Pacific Oysters, sugar, ribbon, or bull kelp***)

***R&D around these species is funded through another AMC project, the Joint Innovation Project (JIP) through the Research & Development component.

Proposals must demonstrate engagement with local Alaska Native entities and include a plan for ongoing engagement with local Alaska Native entities to ensure the results of the proposed project will benefit, respect and represent the values of the local Alaska Native community. This RFP will not accept proposals around the cultivation of black seaweed. All products produced under this RFP will become publicly available on completion. Specific deliverables, deadlines, and projects will be identified in collaboration with selected contractor(s).

Deliverables

The following deliverables will be a requirement of all funded projects:

- Semiannual reports to SEC detailing progress, including any problems encountered and how they are being addressed.
- Annual virtual presentation to AMC Coalition members on project progress
- Summary of the project to be presented at the annual Alaska Mariculture Conference or a similar mutually-agreeable venue.
- A copy of all data produced in conducting the project. Data should be provided in commonly-used formats that allow other researchers to re-analyze the data.
- A final report submitted to SEC detailing project outcomes – including successes, challenges, and lessons learned – to be posted online for the public.

Funding Available

Funding is secured through the AMC Equipment & Technology component of the BBBRC. Start dates must be between February 1 and May 1, 2025. Selected proposals will be funded for a timeline generally limited to 18 months, and must be completed by September 2026.

The number of projects funded and award amounts will depend on the quantity and quality of proposals received. Proposals may only request funding up to \$150,000. If the need for additional related services arises, additional scope and budget may be added to this contract on mutual agreement.

General Requirements

Single Point of Contact. The consultant will designate one person as the project manager and point of contact with SEC. In the case of multiple investigators/contractors, one shall be designated as the lead to serve as the project manager and point of contact. Any change of lead personnel shall be reported to SEC within 7 days.

Disbarment. Applicants must have or acquire a UEI and be registered through SAM.gov prior to award finalization. Applicants, including any subcontractors, must not be disbarred from receiving federal funds.

Alaska Business License. Per AS 43.70.020(a) a business license is required for the privilege of engaging in a business in the State of Alaska. Per AS 43.70.110(1) “Business” means a for-profit or non-profit entity engaging or offering to engage in a trade, a service, a profession, or an activity with the goal of receiving a financial benefit in exchange for the provision of services, or goods, or other property. If selected for funding under this RFP, an [Alaska Business License](#) will be required.

Restrictions on Funds. Funding is not eligible to be used for infrastructure, including construction, real property or improvements to real property. Funding cannot be used to purchase equipment. “Equipment” means purchases of single units with a total purchase price, including shipping and installation, in excess of \$5,000. If proposal is contingent upon purchasing equipment, please contact Dan Lesh (dan@seconference.org) to discuss in advance of proposal submission. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Public Information. All products produced under this RFP will become publicly available on completion. All files and raw data collected during this project shall be the property of SEC.

Proposal Contents

Proposals are expected to be no more than 8-10 pages in length, excluding attachments such as budget templates and resumes.

Proposals should include the following components:

- **Introduction and Understanding of the Project.** Include the RFP title, discussion of project context and importance, and an overview of the project team and approach.
- **Methodology.** Discuss proposed approach to accomplishing the scope of work listed, including proposed deliverables and timeline. Respondents may propose to provide services related to one or more of the tasks listed above.
- **Experience and Qualifications.** Describe relevant experience of the firm and key team members, including any subcontractors if part of your team. Relevant experience includes projects with related content as well as project experience working with rural, coastal, and/or indigenous stakeholders.
- **Management Plan.** Briefly describe how the work will be managed including the role of each key individual/subcontractor expected to be involved in the work and their availability to complete the work.
- **Costs.** Provide a total project cost and breakdown, using the [budget template spreadsheet available at this link](#). For larger projects with discrete phases, please fill out a budget template spreadsheet for each phase.

Proposal Submission Process

Deadline. Submit proposals in pdf format by **December 17, 2024 at 5pm AKST** via email to procurement officer Alan Sorum at alan@seconference.org and project manager Dan Lesh at dan@seconference.org.

- Proposers are encouraged to verify with the procurement officer that the proposal has been received prior to the deadline.
- Proposals and additional information provided after the deadline may also be considered but only if such information can be accommodated by the review process.

Public Information: Proposals and work plans may be distributed throughout the organization for review and comment. Proprietary information should not be submitted in any proposal. SEC will not

knowingly reveal the contents of a proposal that is not subsequently accepted for contract; however, SEC accepts no liability should such contents inadvertently be revealed to third parties.

Changes. Any changes or addendum will be posted on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster website and sent directly to respondents who have specifically requested notification.

Preparation Costs. SEC is not liable for any costs incurred by the proposer during the proposal preparation.

Questions. Inquiries regarding this request for qualifications shall be directed to procurement officer Alan Sorum at alan@seconference.org and project manager Dan Lesh at dan@seconference.org.

Evaluation Criteria and Award Process

Criteria for evaluating proposals is as follows:

- Importance of the research and development project to growth of the Alaska mariculture industry (35%)
- Past experience on relevant or similar projects (20%)
- Demonstration of capacity and methods to complete deliverables successfully and within a reasonable timeline (20%)
- Costs are reasonable and fall within available/projected funding levels (25%).

Scoring of each proposal against the criteria listed above will be conducted by an RFP review committee. SEC reserves the right to reject any and all of the proposals received. If necessary, SEC may select the proposal or proposals that, in its sole view, most nearly conform to its needs as outlined in this RFP and then negotiate directly with that consultant to refine the proposal to achieve a contract that fully satisfies SEC needs.

A notice of intent to award is expected to be announced by January 14, 2024.

About Southeast Conference

As the state and federally designated regional economic development organization for Southeast Alaska, Southeast Conference serves as the collective voice for advancing the region's economy. Southeast Conference has over 200 member organizations representing 1,200 people from 32 regional communities and 19 Tribes. The mission of Southeast Conference is to undertake and support activities that promote strong economies, healthy communities, and a quality environment in Southeast Alaska. Southeast Conference formed in 1958 with a group of people supporting the establishment of a regional transportation system in Southeast Alaska, which led to the formation of the Alaska Marine Highway System. After that success Southeast Conference stayed together through more than a half-century to focus on concerns unique to the region, including transportation, maritime, tourism, seafood, natural resources, health care, government, and overall quality of life.



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Kelp Agricultural Product Development and Testing

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) 2024-04

EDA Project Number 07-79-07901

Date of Issue: 8/12/2024

Proposals Due: 10/21/2024

Links have been updated

Summary

Southeast Conference is soliciting proposals for agricultural product development and/or field trials involving Alaska kelp. Funded projects will conduct research and development projects that result in publicly available reports and data that advance an understanding of the most promising agricultural uses of Alaska kelp. Multiple projects may be funded through this RFP, with project completion required by September 2026. All Build Back Better Regional Challenge funds must be expended no later than September 30th, 2026. Proposals are welcome from companies, Tribes, Native Corporations, universities, non-profit organizations, government agencies, and other entities working in Alaska.

Background

Southeast Conference – the state and federally recognized economic development organization for Southeast Alaska – is the lead institution administering a federal grant from the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) to grow Alaska’s mariculture industry through the Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) program. The Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) grant coalition includes a diverse group of stakeholders including Alaska state regulatory agencies, Alaska’s university system, Economic Development Districts, trade organizations, and more. A Governance Body, composed of AMC

coalition leads as well as Tribal representatives from each of the project regions, guides the work and equity metrics of the overall grant. The Alaska Mariculture Cluster has an overall equity goal that applies to all projects. Specifically, 25% of AMC program impacts and investments are targeted to rural underserved communities and 25% to Alaska Native entities and individuals.

The AMC grant is composed of seven component projects (listed below), which have been purposely designed to be complementary to address barriers to growth and break out of the “chicken or egg” cycle of industry development:

- Revolving Loan Fund
- Governance, Coordination and Outreach
- Workforce Development
- Research and Development
- Market Development
- Green Energy
- Equipment and Technology

The full project period for the AMC BBBRC project is October 1, 2022 – September 30th, 2026. More information on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) is available at www.alaskamariculturecluster.org, including the Overarching Narrative, which explains how the seven components work together to grow the mariculture industry in an equitable and environmentally responsible manner.

This RFP is funded through the AMC Research and Development Component Project, with a possibility of other federal funds/grants to SEC supplying additional funding.

Related AMC Projects

While not an exhaustive list, relevant projects underway within the AMC project include those listed below. Applicants are encouraged to review these projects and consider ways to collaborate or build on what has been learned or is underway.

- \$360,000 in seaweed tissue analysis to be completed in 2024 and roughly the same again in 2025. More details on the targeted set of seaweed species and analytes is provided in [the RFP \(and links within\)](#) that went out to select the lab.
- Two rounds of Joint Innovation Projects (JIP) have been launched. JIP Round 1 awards ([more info here](#)) were made in Spring 2023 and included six projects in the area of seaweed processing along with three related to kelp farming. JIP Round II awards ([more info here](#)) were made in Summer 2024 and included seven related to seaweed processing and four related to kelp farming.
- [Round I of the Equipment program](#) resulted in four projects under way that involve the purchase of seaweed processing or seaweed hatchery/nursery equipment.
- Round I of the AMC Other Species program funded two projects developing methods to grow new seaweed species not currently in broad cultivation, including dulse, split kelp, and dragon kelp. For more information contact SEC staff.

Scope of Work

Southeast Conference is soliciting proposals for agricultural product development, testing, and field trials with Alaska kelp. Funded projects will conduct research and development projects that result in publicly available reports and data that advance an understanding of the most promising agricultural uses of Alaska kelp. Of particular interest are products with plant biostimulant or fertilizer properties, livestock feeds that incorporate kelp, or other kelp-based agricultural products. Projects involving field trials can include a product development component or test commercially-available products made with Alaska kelp.

Eligible Project Categories

All projects will be done with species of kelp proposed for cultivation in Alaska and that have demonstrated potential for scale. Project proposals must be in one or both of the following eligible categories:

- Product development, including purchasing kelp, processing trials, product analysis, and related work.
- Testing of product efficacy at farms, greenhouses, ranches, agriculture research facilities, or other real or simulated agricultural settings.

The goal of this RFP is to fund projects with demonstrated potential to result in scalable commercial applications and contribute to mariculture industry growth in Alaska.

Deliverables

The following deliverables will be a requirement of all funded projects:

- Semiannual reports to SEC detailing progress, including any problems encountered and how they are being addressed.
- Annual virtual presentation to AMC Coalition members on project progress
- Summary of the project to be presented at the annual Alaska Mariculture Conference or a similar mutually-agreeable venue.
- A copy of all data produced in conducting the project. Data should be provided in commonly-used formats that allow other researchers to re-analyze the data.
- A final report submitted to SEC detailing project outcomes – including successes, challenges, and lessons learned – to be posted online for the public.

Funding Available

Funding is secured through the federally funded Alaska Mariculture Cluster grant, with a possibility of other federal funds/grants to SEC supplying additional funding. Projects must be completed by September 2026 and must build in and meet intermediate milestones that indicate continued research is warranted.

Project proposals may be funded in the range of \$50,000 to \$500,000. Project impact is expected to be scaled with project budget. If the need for additional related services arises, additional scope and budget may be added to this contract on mutual agreement.

Matching funds are not required but will score extra points.

General Requirements

Single Point of Contact. The consultant will designate one person as the project manager and point of contact with SEC. In the case of multiple investigators/contractors, one shall be designated as the lead to serve as the project manager and point of contact. Any change of lead personnel shall be reported to SEC within 7 days.

Disbarment. Applicants must have or acquire a UEI and be registered through SAM.gov prior to award finalization. Applicants, including any subcontractors, must not be disbarred from receiving federal funds.

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Public Information. All products produced under this RFP will become publicly available on completion. All files and raw data collected during this project shall be the property of SEC.

Proposal Contents

Proposals are expected to be no more than 12 pages in length, excluding attachments such as budget template, resumes, and project summaries/examples.

Proposals should include the following components:

- **Introduction and Understanding of the Project.** Include the RFP title, discussion of project context and importance, and an overview of the project team and approach.
- **Methodology.** Discuss proposed approach to accomplishing the scope of work listed, including proposed deliverables and timeline.
- **Experience and Qualifications.** Describe relevant experience of the firm and key team members, including any subcontractors if part of your team. Relevant experience includes projects with related content as well as project experience working with rural, coastal, and/or indigenous participants.
- **Management Plan.** Briefly describe how the work will be managed including the role of each key individual/subcontractor expected to be involved in the work and their availability to complete the work.
- **Costs.** Provide a total project cost and breakdown, using the Contractor Budget Template available on [the Grantee Resources webpage](#). For larger projects with discrete phases, please fill out a budget template spreadsheet for each phase.

Proposal Submission Process

Deadline. Submit proposals in pdf format by 10/21/2024 by 5pm AST via email to procurement officer Alan Sorum at alan@seconference.org and project manager Dan Lesh at dan@seconference.org.

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Evaluation Criteria and Award Process

Criteria for evaluating proposals is as follows:

- Feasibility of the proposed project and demonstration of capacity to complete all of the deliverables within the required timeline (30%)
- Impact: Potential to result in scalable commercial applications and contribute to mariculture industry growth in Alaska. Impacts are expected to be scaled with project budget (40%)
- Past experience on relevant and/or similar projects (20%)
- Other resources committed by the project team (i.e. matching funds, existing equipment, staff time, etc.) (10%)

Scoring of each proposal against the criteria listed above will be conducted by an RFP review committee. SEC reserves the right to reject any and all of the proposals received. If necessary, SEC may select the proposals that, in its sole view, most nearly conform to its needs as outlined in this RFP and then negotiate directly with that proposer to refine the proposal to achieve a contract that fully satisfies SEC needs.

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To: Southeast Conference
From: McKinley Research Group and Pacific Shellfish Institute
Date: November 7, 2024
Re: Alaska Mariculture Industry Overview, Fall 2024

The Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) contracted with McKinley Research Group and the Pacific Shellfish Institute to provide AMC and the broader mariculture industry with current information about topics including oyster and seaweed harvest, farm utilization, seed supply and quality, and growing techniques. This is the first of three annual memos produced as part of AMC's Mariculture Industry Tracking project.

Key Findings

- Seaweed harvest likely fell in 2024, while oyster harvest rose.
- A lack of markets and poor seed quality negatively impacted the seaweed sector in 2024. Demand for frozen Alaska kelp for food products contracted in 2024, but greater access to kelp drying in 2025 may open new markets.
- While oyster markets seem to have softened nationwide in 2024, at least slightly, Alaskan oyster farmers did not have this experience with in-state sales.
- Both seaweed and oyster harvests are expected to increase in 2025.
- On average, much of the space on currently permitted oyster farms was used in 2024, while a small fraction of space on seaweed farms was used.

Methods

The findings in this memo are based on primary research and review of available data.

Primary research completed for this analysis included questionnaires sent to aquatic farm and seaweed hatchery operators, fielded in August 2024. A total of 21 completed questionnaires were returned. Interview research with 15 farms, hatcheries, and other industry experts were conducted in September 2024 to supplement questionnaire responses.

The project team reviewed harvest data (through 2023) from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, as well as aquatic farm lease information from the Alaska Department of Natural



Resources. Most of Alaska’s aquatic farming takes place in state waters leased through the Alaska Department of Natural Resources aquatic farm leasing program.¹

TERMINOLOGY

Seaweed harvest - Estimates for “harvested” seaweed weight do not necessarily refer to seaweed that is removed from the water. Harvested seaweed (in both this report and Alaska Department of Fish and Game records) includes both landed seaweed and estimates for the weight of some seaweed that is grown and discarded without being removed from the water. This year’s memo does not track seaweed that is sold because of limited data for current year because some seaweed is in inventory and may or may not be sold this year. In 2023, about two-thirds of the seaweed harvested on commercial farms was sold, according to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, up from less than half in 2022.

Growing seasons - Oyster harvests are described by calendar year, while seaweed harvest are described by both the out-planting and harvest season (for example, for the 2024/2025 season, farmers out-plant in 2024 and harvest in 2025). This two-year description is a generalization: Some farmers out-planted in early 2024 and harvested the same year, and multiple farmers plan to experiment with year-round growing for giant kelp this year.

2025 forecasts - Harvest forecasts for 2025 are based on farmer estimates for the year ahead based on seed orders. These forecasts are likely over-estimates given the many unknowns associated with ocean farming.

Commercial Harvest Estimates

Alaska’s oyster harvest is forecast to triple between 2023 and 2025, while seaweed harvest is expected to fall in 2024 and recover to 2023 levels in 2025.

OYSTER HARVEST

Alaska Department of Fish and Game data show oyster harvests fell to 1.3 million oysters in 2023, following two years of about 2 million oysters.

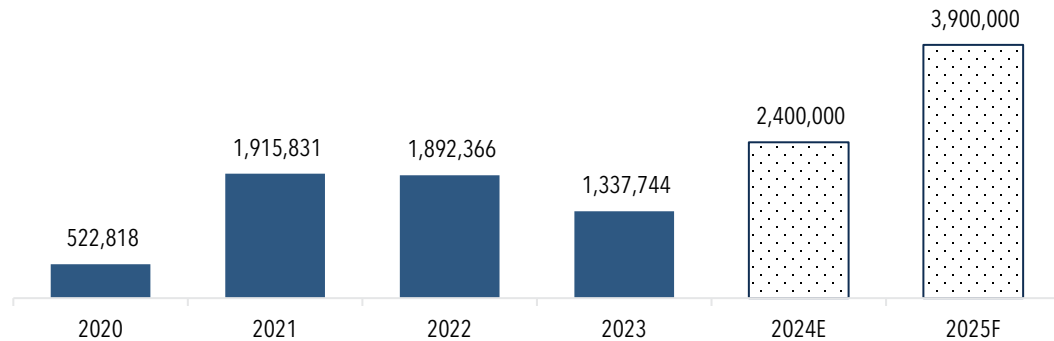
Alaska oyster harvest volumes increased by about 80% in 2024 to a record 2.4 million individual oysters, based on estimates developed in this analysis. Oyster harvests are forecasted to grow another 60% between 2024 and 2025.

The estimated increase in 2024 and 2025 is largely from reports of increased production at established farms as well as one large new oyster farm in Southeast Alaska. As in other recent

¹ In 2023 there were five aquatic farms not on state waters, which do not require leases but do require a permit from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, according to summary annual report data from permit holders.

years, most oysters harvested in the state in 2024 were grown in Southcentral. However, Southeast may have the largest oyster harvest in 2025 if regional activity increases as expected.

Figure 1. Alaska Oyster Harvest, (count of oysters sold*) 2020 – 2025 Forecast



Sources: Alaska Department of Fish & Game (2020-2023), MRG/PSI estimate/forecast (2024-2024)

*Excludes sale of oysters between farms.

Alaska’s pre-2020 oyster sales data can be difficult to interpret and are not displayed above because oyster sales between farms (juvenile oysters sold from nurseries to larger grow out farms) were previously not separated from final sales in state statistics, causing some individual oysters to be counted multiple times in statewide totals.

Inter-farm oyster transfers (now counted separately in state records) increased in 2023, which is another indicator that oyster numbers are increasing on Alaska’s farms and harvests will be larger in 2024 and 2025.

SEAWEED HARVEST

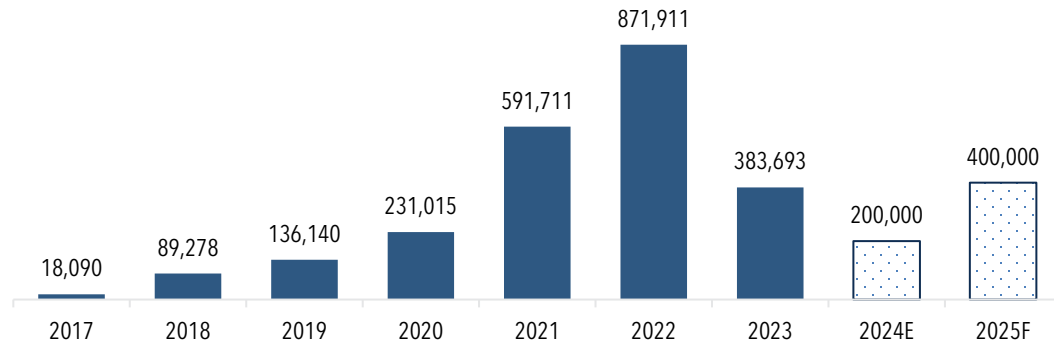
Alaska seaweed harvest fell on the order of 50% between 2023 and 2024 to an estimated 200,000 pounds, based on questionnaire and interview responses. This estimated decline in harvest follows a decline of a similar magnitude in 2023 compared to the record high harvest in 2022. Alaska’s farmers cited poor markets and poor yields as reasons for the decreased harvest.

A lack of buyers likely caused farmers to pull back and out-plant less seeded line in fall 2023. Sales of seeded line declined by about 25% between the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 seasons, which is another indicator of decreased out-planting.

Farmers attributed poor yields in the 2023/2024 season to both poor-performing seaweed seed and in some cases their own limited farming experience, as described in the “seed supply” section below.

The two-year trend of declining harvests is expected to reverse in 2025, with harvests returning to around 2023 levels. The expected increase is due to farmers feeling more confident about their seed quality in 2024 as well as at least three new farms coming online.

Figure 2. Alaska Seaweed Harvest, 2017-2023 Actual and 2024-2025 Estimate/Projection (wet pounds)



Source: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, industry interviews, and McKinley Research Group/Pacific Shellfish Institute estimates

Seaweed Species Trends

Sugar kelp and ribbon kelp continue to be the most grown seaweeds on Alaska farms, along with bull kelp to a lesser extent. The 2025 season is expected to be a breakout year for wider commercial farm tests of at least three additional species: split kelp (*Saccharina groenlandica*), dragon kelp (*Eularia fistulosa*), and three-ribbed kelp (*Cymathære triplicate*).

Part of the interest in new species comes from Alaska Mariculture Cluster research funding this year to expand Alaska’s harvest beyond Pacific oysters and the three dominant seaweed species. Additionally, farmers reported there may be more interest from existing food markets for non-sugar kelp seaweeds.

As one interview participant stated:

“Sugar kelp is the pink salmon of the seaweed world. Fast to grow, but not necessarily the most interesting.”

Seaweed Yield

Comparing seaweed harvest to the previous year’s seeded line sales provides a rough measure of average productivity across all farms. This measure is described here as an “implied” yield because of several factors:

- Not all seeded line sold is necessarily used, resulting in actual yield of out-planted seed above this estimate of implied yield.

- Yields vary by species, and yield variation may be a reflection of changing species mix.
- While most seeded line is sold one year before the harvest year, some line is sold late, in the same calendar year as the harvest.

The implied yield values described in the following table align with interview findings of particularly low 2024 yields. The estimated 2024 implied yield is less than one pound per foot. For context, directly measured yield in a 16-farm study in Maine averaged 4.2 pounds per foot of line in 2022, up from 3.7 in 2017.²

Table 1. Alaska Seeded Line Sales, Seaweed Harvests and Implied Yields (2021-Estimated 2024)

Year	Feet of Seeded Line Sold in Previous Year	Pounds of Seaweed Harvested	Implied Yield: Pounds Harvested per Foot of Seeded Line Sold in Previous Year
2021	260,350	591,711	2.3
2022	247,200	871,911	3.5
2023	321,600	383,693	1.2
2024 estimate	237,100	200,000*	0.8

Source: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (seaweed and line production), McKinley Research Group calculations

Mariculture Markets

OYSTER MARKETS

Alaska’s oyster production is dwarfed by states like Washington and Virginia, which lead the nation in oyster production by volume.³ As of 2022, Washington state continues to lead national shellfish sales (\$166.4 million in 2022 sales), followed by Virginia (\$93.6 million) and Florida (\$53.3 million).⁴ Alaska was not among the top 10 oyster producing states.

According to the last nationwide assessment of U.S. aquaculture, national oyster production totaled over 19 million metric tons.⁵ The report describes “Thriving shellfish industries... in all coastal regions of the United States, however the Atlantic and Pacific Coast states produce more oysters, clams, and mussels by value (\$134.1 and \$131.0 million, respectively), while the Gulf states produce more by volume (24.3 million pounds).”

² Maine Aquaculture Association, 2023. [“Maine Seaweed Benchmarking Report.”](#) Note that Maine’s farms grow sugar

³ USDA Census of Aquaculture

⁴ USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

⁵ Based on 2020 NOAA Fisheries of the United States and 2019 USDA Census data

Nationwide, oyster prices seem to have softened slightly in 2024.⁶ To date in 2024, interviews indicate Alaska oyster farmers did not experience this with in-state sales.

Researchers and economists watching oyster markets speculate that the price point for half-shell oysters (e.g. raw consumption, served on the half shell) may be hitting a ceiling of what U.S. consumers are willing to pay, especially given recent inflation trends and consumer reluctance to eat out as frequently. Efforts are under way by Pacific Shellfish Institute (PSI) and collaborators on the East Coast to better understand oyster markets and recent trends in U.S. oyster production and supply chains.

SEAWEED MARKETS

Farmers reported declining demand from seaweed buyers in food markets last year, including from consumer-packaged goods products and the ingredient market. In general, 2024 was a challenging year for kelp-based food products: with closures of seaweed businesses including chips company 12 Tides and kelp burger maker AKUA.⁷

Global seaweed consultant and author of the Phyconomy seaweed newsletter Steven Hermans described the closures in seaweed packaged goods companies this year as the natural result of the explosion of new products that launched a few years ago and a limited niche for seaweed food products.

"I'm surprised we haven't seen more bankruptcies," he said. Not everyone was meant to survive. In 2020 and 2021 everyone was sitting in their kitchen saying. 'Let's make some seaweed products.'"

While food markets were never envisioned as the largest markets of Alaska kelp, this market has been the primary buyers of Alaska kelp as the industry works to establish itself.⁸ Diminishing demand has led growers to out-plant decreasing volumes of seeded line for the two years following the peak Alaska harvest of more than 800,000 pounds in 2022.

Table 2. Top Ten Mollusk Producing States by Value, 2022 (\$ Millions)

State	Annual Mollusk Sales
Washington	\$166.4
Virginia	\$93.6
Florida	\$53.3
Massachusetts	\$35.1
California	\$31.4
South Carolina	\$29.6
Maine	\$23.1
Oregon	\$19.7
Louisiana	\$19.0
Connecticut	\$17.4

Source: United States Department of Agriculture

⁶ CNN Business. [Inflation Comes for Your Oysters](#). August, 2024.

⁷ See Green Queen, "[Akua: Kelp Burger Startup Winds Down Amid Wider Plant-Based Industry Headwinds](#)," August, 2024 for a discussion of the closure of New York-based kelp-burger producer Akua in August 2024. While Akua used Maine kelp rather than Alaska kelp, it faced many of the same market headwinds as companies that use Alaska kelp.

While existing markets have contracted in 2024, the industry has long been faced with limited markets for Alaska kelp. In 2022, the year of the peak Alaska seaweed harvest, more than half of the farmed kelp harvested in Alaska was not sold. Kelp that is not sold includes product kept for personal use, dumped, used in testing, and donated. About a third was not sold in 2023.⁸ Interview participants expressed some optimism that seaweed drying equipment that will be available in 2025 may increase demand because of interest from current buyers in dried seaweed.

Several companies have piloted technologies that promise to create a larger market by extracting chemical compounds from kelp, making it possible to create higher value products near the farm site without having to dry kelp or ship it long distances from Alaska to markets. These companies include Cascadia Seaweed, Kelp Blue, Macro Oceans, Ocean Rainforest, and Oceanium. While these companies have the potential to be future large volume buyers, this sector is still developing and is not expected to significantly change seed out-planting volumes until fall 2025 or later.

Grant-funded research was also a significant source of income for seaweed farms in 2024. In particular, farmers mentioned receiving support from the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (the funder of this research) and GreenWave's Kelp Climate Fund, a subsidy for kelp farms that pays farmers based on how much seeded line they outplant (up to \$25,000 per year for up to three years) and estimates cumulative environmental benefits of supported kelp farms.

Regional Trends (Seaweed, Oysters, and Non-Oyster Shellfish)

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA (PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND AND KENAI PENINSULA)

Most oyster and kelp farming takes place in different areas of Southcentral Alaska. Oyster farming is well-established in Kachemak Bay, near Homer on the Kenai Peninsula. Farms in this region have produced most of Alaska's oysters in recent years and produce mussels and wild "natural set" kelp that grows on shellfish farming equipment. Alaska Shellfish Farms in Kachemak Bay is the largest oyster farm in the state (by production volume). There are also a couple active kelp farms in Kachemak Bay and additional proposed.

Most kelp farming takes place near Cordova in Prince William Sound. Kelp farming has not taken place in this region as long as in Kodiak or Prince of Wales Island in Southeast Alaska, but at least three kelp farms were active in 2023/2024, with a fourth expected to out-plant in 2024/2025. Prince William Sound also has multiple oyster farms, but not as many as Kachemak Bay.

⁸ Alaska Department of Fish & Game statistics

SOUTHEAST

Southeast Alaska is a significant location for both oyster and seaweed production. Southeast Alaska is also the state's hub for geoduck clam aquatic farm leases, although harvest data for farmed geoducks are unavailable. Both oyster and seaweed farming is concentrated in southern Southeast around Prince of Wales Island and Ketchikan, although there are active farms in other parts of the region including around Juneau and Wrangell.

Southeast Alaska oyster production expanded in 2024, helped by oysters at a new 27-acre oyster farm, Seagrove Oysters, near Craig, starting to reach maturity. The region produced about half of the state's adult oysters. If conditions and markets allow, Southeast oyster production is expected to continue growing in 2025. Increased harvest is expected at established farms in southern Southeast (home to Hump Island near Ketchikan, Canoe Lagoon near Coffman Cove, and several farms around Naukati Bay) as well as larger parts of Seagrove's farm reaching maturity.

Southeast Alaska's seaweed harvest fell in 2024 and will likely fall again in 2025 as the Seagrove farm pauses their kelp farming operation. Two potential new seaweed growers include Kelp Blue and Pacific Kelp Co., two companies with large seaweed farms in the permitting pipeline, which plan to grow giant kelp (*Macrocystis pyrifera*) in southern Southeast.

SOUTHWEST (KODIAK ARCHIPELAGO AND ALEUTIANS)

The Southwest region has been the center of seaweed growing in Alaska and produced the bulk of the state's seaweed harvest in 2024. However, along with the state in general, seaweed harvest declined in 2024.

Kelp farming in western Alaska is primarily clustered around the Kodiak road system, with some activity and several inactive leases in more remote parts of the Kodiak archipelago. Farther west of Kodiak, aquatic farm leases have been approved (although not used) as far west as Sand Point in the Eastern Aleutian Borough and proposed as far west as Adak in far southwestern Alaska.

On a statewide scale, Western Alaska is not a significant producer of Pacific oysters for the commercial market, but there is one established farm in Larsen Bay and interest is growing from some of the region's kelp farmers.

Aquatic Farm Capacity and Utilization

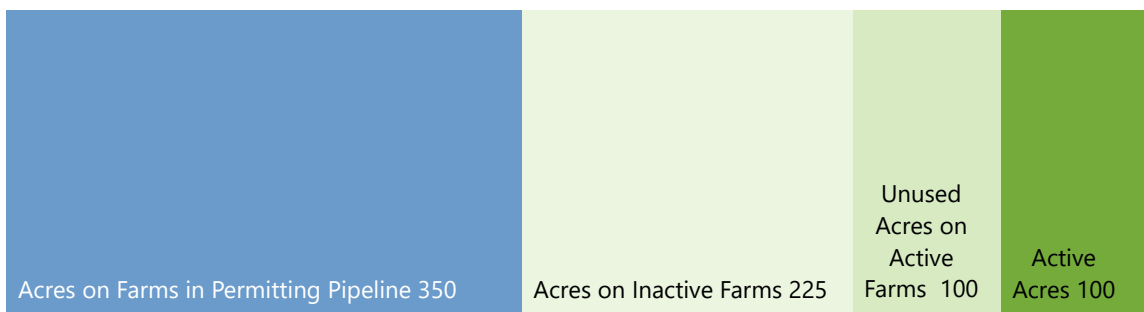
OYSTER FARM UTILIZATION

Alaska's oyster farming industry has room to quadruple production within existing aquatic farm footprints; however, little of the room to grow is on the most active existing farms.

There were an estimated 425 acres available for oyster farming at Alaska’s authorized aquatic farms in 2024. Of these, there were 225 acres on farms that did not harvest oysters in 2024, most of which are in the unused 182-acre Silver Bay Seafoods oyster farm site near Sitka.

Among the estimated 200 acres on active oyster farms, an estimated 50 percent of available space was used across the state on average. However, the statewide average is skewed by a few large farm sites with fewer than 50% of acres active in 2024. The majority of farms used far more of their available space, with many small 1-3 acre farms using all of their available space.

Figure 1. Estimated Utilization of 785 Acres Proposed or Authorized for Alaska Commercial Oyster Harvest, 2024



Sources: Alaska Department of Natural Resources, industry interviews, and McKinley Research Group estimates
 Note: Parts do not sum to total due to rounding. Acreage includes farms permitted for both seaweed and shellfish (some farm statistics were excluded or modified where interviews show farm is exclusively or predominantly seaweed focused).

OYSTER PERMITTING PIPELINE

Most of the currently proposed oyster farms would be owned by Chenega Regional Development Group, which is the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act village corporation for the community of Chenega, in the southwest side of Prince William Sound. In 2024, the corporation applied for six aquatic oyster farm leases covering about 200 acres in total. These aquatic farms are still in the early stages of the permitting process.

Existing oyster farmers Markos Scheer (Seagrove) and Trevor Sande (Hump Island) also have aquatic farm leases in the permitting process, totaling about 100 and 50 acres respectively.

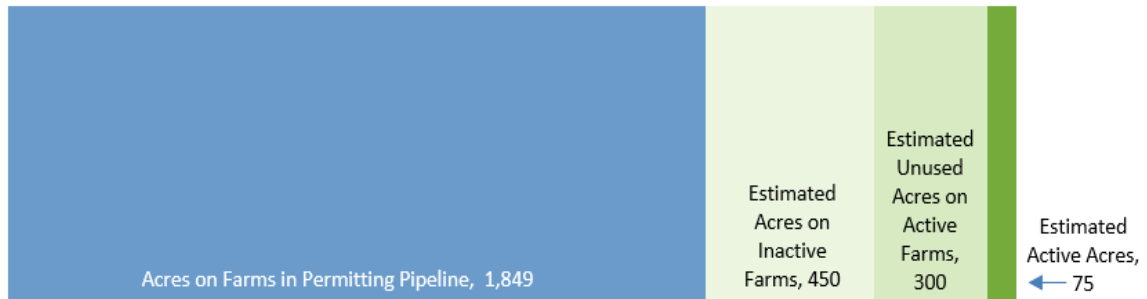
SEAWEED FARM UTILIZATION

Seaweed farm utilization was low in the 2023/2024 season because of the market conditions and limited processing options described earlier in this document. Of about 825 acres permitted and available for seaweed farming, an estimated 75 acres were actively used.

Several large farm sites were not used, including a 101-acre farm site in Sand Point owned by Trident Seafoods and several 10-40 acres sites outside Cordova and around Kodiak Island.

Among active farm sites, interviews and questionnaire responses indicate about 20% of available space was used, on average.

Figure 2. Estimated Utilization of 2,723 Acres of Proposed or Authorized for Alaska Commercial Seaweed Farming in the 2023/2024 Growing Season



Sources: Alaska Department of Natural Resources, industry interviews and McKinley Research Group estimates
 Note: Parts do not sum to total due to rounding. Acreage includes farms permitted for both seaweed and shellfish (some farm statistics were excluded or modified where interviews show farm is exclusively or predominantly shellfish focused).

SEAWEED PERMITTING PIPELINE

More than 1,800 acres of proposed seaweed farm sites are in the permitting process, including seven proposed farms that are 100 acres or larger. The largest pending farm is a 400-acre site off Prince of Wales Island proposed by Dutch startup Kelp Blue. The company also has a 121-acre farm further along in the permitting process.

Seed Supply

OYSTER SEED SUPPLY

Interviews indicated that many Alaska farms are relying on relatively small (3-5mm) oyster seed, which they are importing into the state and raising to grow-out size with systems such as mesh bags. More widespread use of nurseried seed grown to a larger size in a Floating Upwelling System (FLUPSY) could potentially boost the output of Alaska farms, but availability from Alaska FLUPSYs is limited and farmers report that importing nurseried seed is expensive when available.

Increased FLUPSY capacity in Alaska has long been identified as important to Alaska's oyster mariculture industry.⁹ FLUPSYs, which pump water to increase the flow and available supply of nutrients to juvenile oysters, have the potential to make Alaska's oyster industry more competitive by increasing juvenile oyster growth rates and decreasing mortality.

Although some farmers expressed interest in more Alaska Mariculture Cluster investment in the state's oyster seed infrastructure, others expressed concerns about unintended consequences. As one oyster farm operator stated when asked "Do you have any concerns about the quality or availability of oyster seed for your operations?"

"Yes, [I'm] concerned that grant funded seed operations [will] outcompete commercial operations, reducing the number of vendors willing to sell in Alaska, and reducing seed quality and availability."

Larvae and seed imports to Alaska

All oysters imported in Alaska at the larvae stage currently come from Hawaiian Shellfish, LLC of Hilo, Hawaii.¹² Hawaiian Shellfish is the only shellfish hatchery certified to import oyster larvae into Alaska. Interview research conducted for this analysis, although limited to a small number of farmers, indicates that Hawaiian Shellfish/Nisbett Oyster Co. is the largest importer of oysters at the larger seed

OYSTER SEED TERMINOLOGY

Pacific oysters are not native to Alaska and do not typically reproduce in the state's cold waters. All oyster seed purchased by Alaska farmers initially comes as larvae from outside of the state. Various terms are used for oysters as they move from hatchery to final market.

Larvae are less than two weeks old and less than 3 mm long, about the height of two stacked pennies. Some Alaska oysters are grown from imported larvae grown by Alaska hatcheries, while other Alaska oysters are grown from larvae grown into larger "seed" in out-of-state hatcheries.

Seed is a general term for immature oysters less than about 25mm. "Seed" and "spat" are sometimes used interchangeably, but "spat" typically refers to seed for cluster-grown oysters.¹⁰

Nurseried seed is a subcategory of larger seed that have spent time in a FLUPSY or other nursery, growing to 12 mm or larger. Seed brought into Alaska from outside the state must be smaller than 20mm under regulations to prevent disease.¹¹

Grow out size - Oysters are ready to be moved to farm grow out systems such as flip bags or trays (see "Trends in Culture and Techniques" below) when they are about 25mm. In Alaska, oysters spend between one and three years at the grow out stage, depending on conditions, starting size and desired market size.

Market size - Oysters are ready to sell at the "cocktail" size at about 50mm, and more than twice that size if sold as "large" oysters.

⁹ See the Alaska Mariculture Cluster proposal "[Equipment and Technology Component Narrative](#)," 2022.

¹⁰ Cluster-grown oysters are almost always destined for the shucked meat market. To our knowledge, no Alaska oyster farmers are growing cluster oysters, and in-state sales of shucked oyster meat (packaged raw) is currently not occurring. However, three facilities: Craig Fisheries, EC Phillips in Ketchikan, and Jakolof Bay Oyster Co LLC in Homer are permitted "Shucker Packers" on the [FDA Interstate Certified Shellfish Shippers List](#). Notably, these "Shucker Packers" can process oysters for value-added items like smoked and tinned products or sell shucked oyster meat to other facilities making these products.

¹¹ Within Alaska oyster seed sales and transfers are not restricted to less than 20mm, but many other states require juvenile oysters to be less than market sized, typically 2 inches (about 50mm), to be considered seed.

¹² Hawaiian Shellfish is a subsidiary of Nisbett Oyster Co., which also owns Goose Point Oyster Co. an oyster farm in Willapa Bay, Washington.

stage of development in addition to being the only larvae provider. Other out-of-state providers of oyster seed for Alaska farms include the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe (which has facilities in both Hawaii and Washington), and the USDA Pacific Shellfish Research Unit in Newport, Oregon.

The Jamestown S’Kallam Tribe recently began providing larger nurseried seed grown in FLUPSYs to Alaska farmers. While this is a new source of larger seed for Alaska, farmers indicated that it comes with a significantly higher shipping cost compared to importing smaller seed and has not been widely used.

Alaska FLUPSY Usage

While official statistics about FLUPSY use in Alaska are limited, interviews indicate that there were at least five active FLUPSYs in the state in 2024. Of these, two are authorized to sell nurseried seed to other farms (Blue Starr and the Kachemak Shellfish Mariculture Association) while the other three grew seed for their own farms.

The table below shows one measure of existing and potential new FLUPSY operators in Alaska: the 10 operators below all had parcels identified for a FLUPSY in their Alaska Department of Fish and Game aquatic farm permit application. This is not necessarily a comprehensive list, and as noted, most farms on the list did not have an active FLUPSY in 2024.

Table 3. Alaska Department of Aquatic Farm Permits Which Include “FLUPSY” in Parcel Descriptions, 2024

Permit Holder Name	Region	Nearest Community	Active FLUPSY in 2024?	Permitted to sell seed to other farms
Safety Cove Shellfish Co.	Southcentral	Cordova		
Alaska Shellfish Farms LLC	Southcentral	Homer	√	
KSMA*	Southcentral	Homer	√	√
Aquabionics Inc.	Southcentral	Whittier		
Salty Lady Seafood Co.	Southeast	Juneau	√	
Marble Seafoods, LLC	Southeast	Ketchikan	√	
Shinaku Shellfish Company	Southeast	Klawock		
Alaska Oyster Cooperative	Southeast	Naukati		
Blue Starr Oyster Co.	Southeast	Naukati	√	√
Silver Bay Seafoods**	Southeast	Sitka		

Sources: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (list of permits), Alaska Department of Natural Resources (additional permit holder information), and industry interviews (FLUPSY operational status). *Kachemak Shellfish Mariculture Association **This farm site is not currently used.

Multiple farmers are looking to add FLUPSYs to their operations, but no new systems came online in Alaska in 2024. One FLUPSY operation not associated with an oyster farm was permitted in 2024 – in Kodiak – but is not yet operational.

SEAWEED SEED SUPPLY

Poor-performing seaweed seed and low yield (ratio of volume harvested to seed out-planted) was a persistent theme in this year's interviews and questionnaire responses. Some farmers reported particularly low yields of well below one pound of seaweed per foot of seeded line in 2024. Farmers attribute this year's low yields to both poor seed quality and in some cases their own inexperience in seaweed farming. Some of the 2024 harvest problems were particular to changes in hatchery capacity that took place in the 2023 out-planting season, while other issues highlight weaknesses of Alaska's seaweed supply system that remain.

A last-minute scramble for seeded line in fall 2023 was likely a key factor in the low 2024 seaweed yields. Both the Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery in Seward and the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Lena Point Fisheries Facility in Juneau reported receiving an influx of late-season requests for seed because of capacity limitations at the other active seaweed hatcheries in the state. Operators at both hatcheries reported that seaweed harvest yields were poor from seed provided late in the season, either because of late season sori (reproductive tissue) gathering or because of late season out-planting, in some cases in mid-winter.

The hatchery capacity challenges are expected to improve somewhat in the 2024/2025 season due to expanded capacity at the Alaska Ocean Farms hatchery in Kodiak. Most farmers contacted for this research who had poor harvests in 2024 reported they were more confident in the quality of their seed going into the 2024 out-planting season.

Nonetheless, the number of facilities producing seaweed seed likely fell in 2024. Interviews indicate seven Alaska hatcheries produced seaweed seed in 2023. In 2024 the number fell to four, with most of the state's seed produced by Alaska Ocean Farms in Kodiak and Alutiiq Pride in Seward. OceansAlaska in Ketchikan, one of the state's largest hatcheries, did not produce seed in 2024, because the hatchery is a collaboration with Seagrove, which pivoted operations from seaweed to oysters this year. The PWS Science Center in Cordova did not produce seaweed seed in 2024 because the hatchery was focusing on expanding its capacity for future years.

Table 4 Hatcheries Authorized to Produce Seaweed Seed and Operational Status, 2023-2024

Hatchery Operator	Region	Community	Produced Seaweed Seed in:	
			2023	2024
PWS Science Center	Southcentral	Cordova	√	
Native Conservancy	Southcentral	Cordova	√	√
Alutiiq Pride Marine Institute	Southcentral	Seward	√	√
Mothers of Millions LLC	Southcentral	Seward (mobile)	√	
University of Alaska Fairbanks	Southeast	Juneau	√	√
OceansAlaska	Southeast	Ketchikan	√	
Malaspina Sea Farms	Southeast	Yakutat		
Blue Evolution	Southwest	Kodiak		
Alaska Ocean Farms LLC	Southwest	Kodiak	√	√

Sources: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (hatchery permits) and industry interviews (operational status)

Several, long-term challenges with Alaska’s seaweed supply remain. Seed availability at different hatcheries fluctuates between years, and the state’s network of hatcheries includes nonprofit institutions that, while available to help the industry develop, were not designed to serve as a large-scale hatcheries for commercial farms.

Tiff Stephens, a University of Alaska Fairbanks College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences seaweed researcher interviewed for this report, identified a lack of qualified hatchery workers, or even candidates as a key challenge.

“It’s a demanding job and takes training,” she said. “It’s a seasonal job. Times have changed and people don’t want a job, they want a career.”

Alaska’s geography and regulations can also limit the ability of the state’s hatcheries to provide reliable access to seed. To protect biodiversity, Alaska’s seaweed farms must use genetic material from wild seaweed found within 50 miles of the farm site. Farmers have to gather sorus tissue, ship it to a hatchery and then ship the seeded line back.

Seed availability limitations can affect not only crop yield, but also participation. As one interview subject noted, uncertainty about seed availability adds to the complexity of farming seaweed and makes it harder for off season-fishermen to participate.

“This industry is so new and young you have to closely follow hatcheries and go to lots of meetings and research markets to be successful. I just want to be a farmer and grow things.”

Trends in Culture and Techniques

OYSTER TRENDS

Since publication of PSI’s [“Shellfish and Seaweed Species and Gear Thresholds for Alaska Mariculture”](#) report to NOAA in late 2023, oyster farmers are continuing to try new methods via new gear types. In many cases new methods are deployed in addition to existing grow-out techniques, primarily adding new containers such as [FlipFarm](#) alongside suspended stacked tray systems and other, often self-designed, floating containers. This trend is expected to continue, especially if farmers continue to have access to capital through loans, grants, and matching grant programs.

Interest and willingness to try new oyster gear types has been generated as word-of-mouth spreads awareness about new gear types, particularly when use is successful. FlipFarm and [OysterGrow](#) systems are two key examples in Southeast Alaska in 2024. Domestic and international attention to Alaska’s growing mariculture industry is also seemingly attracting suppliers and vendors, making more diverse grow-out gear and processing equipment available to Alaskan farmers. Suppliers are contacting individuals and groups, and participating in conferences and meetings, raising awareness of their products and services among Alaskan oyster farmers and their networks.

SEAWEED TRENDS

Alaska seaweed farm architecture is growing more complex. Alaska commercial seaweed farms, especially larger farms, have moved away from simple suspended longline setups and towards catenary arrays, according to interview research performed for this analysis, as well as the 2023 Pacific Shellfish Institute report to NOAA [“Shellfish and Seaweed Species and Gear Thresholds for Alaska Mariculture.”](#) The latter cited that commercial farmers have limited access to nutrient and current data, which are important factors to successful growth.

Arrays differ from longline setups that were more common in the first years of farming because they are secured both lengthwise and widthwise, as opposed to a single dimension. Arrays promise to reduce the risk of grow lines tangling and can reduce grow line sagging, potentially increasing yield by keeping lines at consistent depths.

While added farm layout complexity can improve results, it can also add cost. PSI's Gear Thresholds Report observed that one farmer overspent on anchoring equipment, building a system that was four times more robust than needed because a hydrodynamic modeler did not have access to ocean current data:

"This cost was magnified by the size of ships/barges and personnel needed for deployment; costs for deployment were non-linear to cost of gear. However, as the industry matures, this will become less of a concern."



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Kelp Seed Quality Improvement

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS RFP #2024-06

EDA Project Number 07-79-0794

Date of Issue: December 18, 2024

Closes: February 12, 2025

Summary

Southeast Conference is soliciting proposals from individuals, companies, or organizations, as part of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) program, to advance projects that improve kelp seed quality and scalability in Alaska.

To scale the kelp industry in Alaska, farmers need increased access to quality, reliable kelp seed. Seed consistency can lower cost structures as well as improve yield estimates, which can inform business planning and build trust with buyers. This RFP is focused on projects with the potential to increase seed quality and consistency for the benefit of Alaska's kelp farmers and coastal communities.

Background

Southeast Conference – the state and federally recognized economic development organization for Southeast Alaska – is the lead institution administering a federal grant from the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) to grow Alaska's mariculture industry through the Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) program. The Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) grant coalition includes a diverse group of stakeholders including Alaska state regulatory agencies, Alaska's university system,

Economic Development Districts, trade organizations, and more. A Governance Body, composed of AMC coalition leads as well as Tribal representatives from each of the project regions, guides the work and equity metrics of the overall grant. The Alaska Mariculture Cluster has an overall equity goal that applies to all projects. Specifically, 25% of AMC program impacts and investments are targeted to rural underserved communities and 25% to Alaska Native entities and individuals.

The AMC grant is composed of seven component projects (listed below), which have been purposely designed to be complementary to address barriers to growth and break out of the “chicken or egg” cycle of industry development:

- Revolving Loan Fund
- Governance, Coordination and Outreach
- Workforce Development
- Research and Development
- Market Development
- Green Energy
- Equipment and Technology

The full project period for the AMC BBBRC project is October 1, 2022 – September 30th, 2026. More information on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) is available at www.alaskamariculturecluster.org, including the Overarching Narrative, which explains how the seven components work together to grow the mariculture industry in an equitable and environmentally responsible manner.

Related AMC Projects

Applicants are encouraged to consider ways to collaborate or build on what has been learned or is currently underway. Related AMC projects underway include:

- Chugach Regional Resources Commission is currently researching optimal gametophyte husbandry and direct seeding protocols for *Saccharina latissima*. This project is funded through an Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation Joint Innovation Project, see [here](#) for more info.

- The [Gene Conservation Lab](#) at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is currently developing GTseq panels for sugar, ribbon, and bull kelp to determine the effective population size and population structure of kelps in Alaska as a sub-awardee of the AMC BBBRC.
- Some recipients of the AMC's [first round of equipment funding](#) are procuring kelp nursery supplies and equipment. A second equipment funding RFP is set to be issued in early January 2025. Note: due to EDA requirements, only certain entities are eligible to be awarded equipment funding. Please refer to the "Eligible Entities" section in the AMC's first [Equipment RFP](#).
- Research by McKinley Research Group and the Pacific Shellfish Institute, summarized in a [November 2024 report](#), found that poor seed quality and failures at the hatchery level contributed to lower harvests in 2024 and are a significant issue currently impacting the Alaska seaweed industry.

Eligible Entities

Some previous RFPs from SEC for the AMC program have not allowed private businesses to apply. That restriction does not apply to this RFP and a wide variety of entities are encouraged to apply. If you need assistance navigating the application process, contact Phoebe Koenig at phoebe@seconference.org and Dan Lesh at dan@seconference.org.

Scope of Work

The Alaska Mariculture Cluster program has a primary focus on Pacific Oysters and three species of kelp: sugar, ribbon, and bull kelp. This RFP is focused on sugar, ribbon, and bull kelp, but projects that extend to other species will be considered.

To scale the kelp industry in Alaska, farmers need increased access to quality, reliable kelp seed. Seed consistency can lower cost structures as well as improve yield estimates, which can inform business planning and build trust with buyers. This RFP is focused on projects with the potential to increase seed quality and consistency for the benefit of Alaska's kelp farmers and coastal communities.

Proposals are sought for projects that advance our knowledge and/or increase the adoption of kelp

nursery best practices. Ultimately, projects should have the potential to facilitate the growth and sustainability of the mariculture industry in Alaska by improving kelp nursery practices and informing related regulatory discussions.

Any project within this scope will be considered. Potential projects could include:

- Investigating how different nursery or seeding methods affect seed quality, consistency, and farm yield
- Investigating how different nursery methods affect the genetic diversity of the resulting seed and kelp
- Comparing efficiency, commercial viability and scalability, resulting genetic diversity, and/or environmental effects of gametophyte- and spore-based seeding methods
- Tech-transfer services to increase adoption of current best practices for Alaska kelp nurseries

Deliverables

Findings from this RFP will become publicly available on completion. Specific deliverables, deadlines, and projects will be identified in collaboration with selected contractor(s). The following deliverables are generally required of all funded projects:

- Semiannual reports to SEC detailing progress, including any problems encountered and how they are being addressed.
- Annual virtual presentation to AMC Coalition members on project progress
- Summary of the project to be presented at the annual Alaska Mariculture Conference or a similar mutually agreeable venue.
- A copy of all data produced in conducting the project, with code when applicable. Data and code should be provided in commonly used formats with READMEs and annotations that allow other researchers to replicate analyses.
- A final report submitted to SEC detailing project outcomes – including successes, challenges, and lessons learned – to be posted online for the public.

Funding Available

Funding is secured through the AMC equipment and technology component of the BBBRC. Selected proposals must be completed and fully invoiced by September 2026.

The number of funded projects and award amounts will depend on the quantity and quality of proposals received. Proposals may request funding up to \$200,000. If the need for additional related services arises, additional scope and budget may be added to this contract on mutual agreement.

General Requirements

Single Point of Contact. The consultant will designate one person as the project manager and point of contact with SEC. In the case of multiple investigators/contractors, one shall be designated as the lead to serve as the project manager and point of contact. Any change of lead personnel shall be reported to SEC within 7 days. The point of contact will send monthly progress reports to AMC and have regular check-ins with the AMC team.

Disbarment. Applicants must have or acquire a UEI and be registered through SAM.gov prior to award finalization. Applicants, including any subcontractors, must not be disbarred from receiving federal funds.

Alaska Business License. Per AS 43.70.020(a) a business license is required for the privilege of engaging in a business in the State of Alaska. Per AS 43.70.110(1) "Business" means a for-profit or non-profit entity engaging or offering to engage in a trade, a service, a profession, or an activity with the goal of receiving a financial benefit in exchange for the provision of services, or goods, or other property. If selected for funding under this RFP, an [Alaska Business License](#) will be required.

Restrictions on Funds. Funding is not eligible to be used for infrastructure, including construction, real property or improvements to real property. Funding cannot be used to purchase equipment. "Equipment" means purchases of single units with a total purchase price in excess of \$5,000. If your proposal is contingent upon purchasing equipment, please contact Dan Lesh (dan@seconference.org) to discuss in advance of proposal submission. We expect to put out an additional Equipment RFP in early

2025 and we will consider projects that intend to apply to that RFP in tandem with this one on a case-by-case basis.

Public Information. All products produced under this RFP will become publicly available on completion. All files and raw data collected during this project shall be the property of SEC.

Proposal Contents

Proposals are expected to be no more than 8 pages in length, excluding attachments such as budget templates and resumes.

Proposals should include the following components:

- **Introduction and Understanding of the Project.** Include the RFP title, discussion of project context and importance, and an overview of the project team and approach.
- **Methodology.** Discuss the proposed approach to accomplishing the scope of work listed, including deliverables and timeline. Respondents may propose to provide services related to one or more of the tasks listed above.
- **Experience and Qualifications.** Describe relevant experience of the firm and key team members, including any subcontractors if part of your team. Relevant experience includes projects with related content as well as project experience working with rural, coastal, and/or indigenous stakeholders.
- **Management Plan.** Briefly describe how the work will be managed including the role of each key individual/subcontractor expected to be involved in the work and their availability to complete the work.
- **Costs.** Provide a total project cost and breakdown, using the [Contractor Budget Template spreadsheet available at this link](#).

Proposal Submission Process

Deadline. Submit proposals in pdf format by **February 12, 2025** via email to Phoebe Koenig at phoebe@seconference.org and Dan Lesh at dan@seconference.org.

- Proposers are encouraged to verify with the procurement officer that the proposal has been received prior to the deadline.
- Proposals and additional information provided after the deadline may also be considered but only if such information can be accommodated by the review process.

Public Information: Proposals and work plans may be distributed throughout the organization for review and comment. Proprietary information should not be submitted in any proposal. SEC will not knowingly reveal the contents of a proposal that is not subsequently accepted for contract; however, SEC accepts no liability should such contents inadvertently be revealed to third parties.

Changes. Any changes or addendum will be posted on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster website and sent directly to respondents who have specifically requested notification.

Preparation Costs. SEC is not liable for any costs incurred by the proposer during the proposal preparation.

Questions. Inquiries should be directed to Phoebe Koenig at phoebe@seconference.org and Dan Lesh at dan@seconference.org.

Evaluation Criteria and Award Process

Criteria for evaluating proposals are as follows:

- Importance of the project to the growth of the Alaska mariculture industry (30%)
- Potential for the project to inform regulatory discussions (10%)
- Past experience on relevant or similar projects (30%)
- Demonstration of capacity and methods to complete deliverables successfully and within a reasonable timeline (20%)
- Costs are reasonable and fall within available/projected funding levels (10%).

Scoring of each proposal against the criteria listed above will be conducted by an RFP review committee. SEC reserves the right to reject any and all of the proposals received. If necessary,

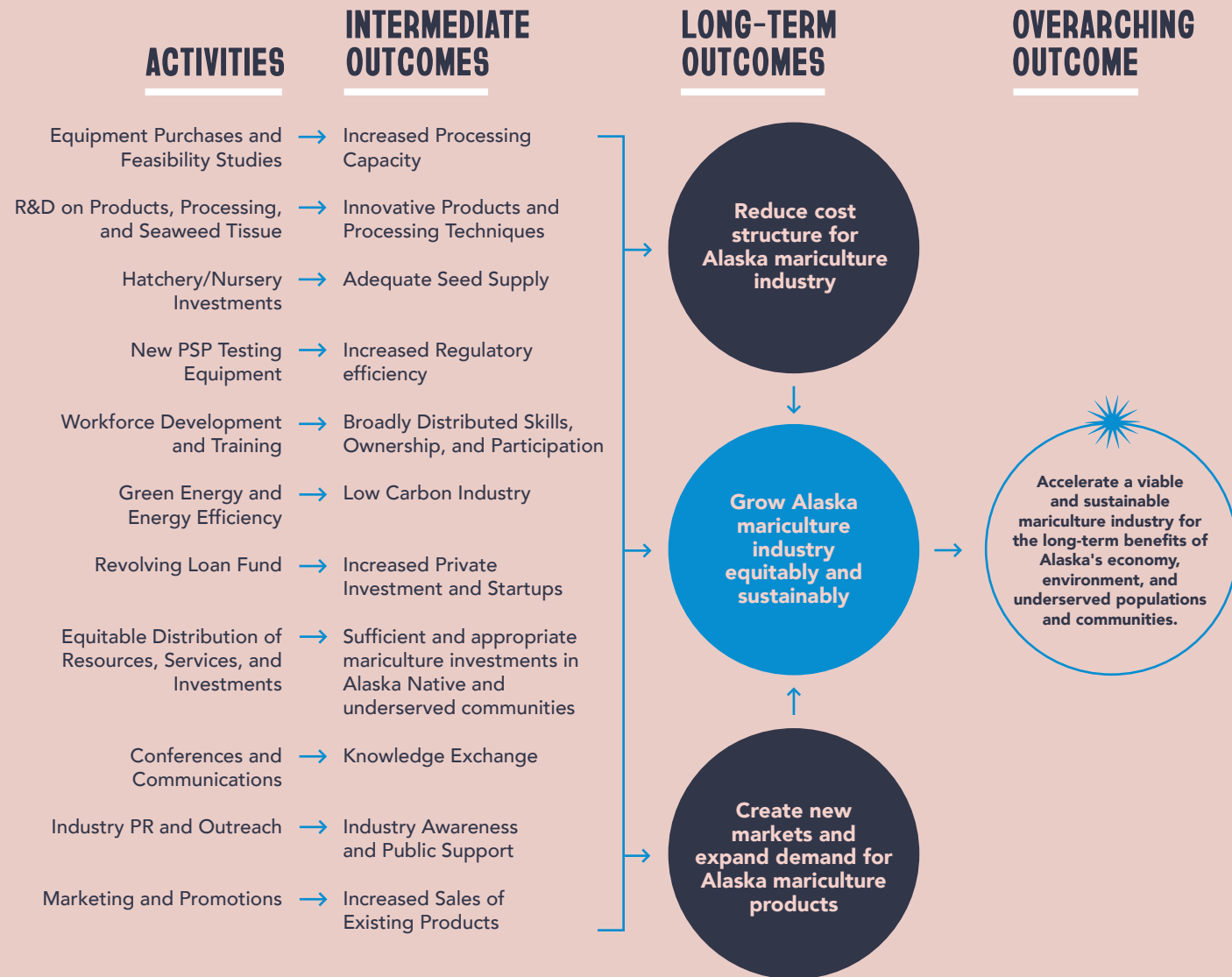
SEC may select the proposal or proposals that, in its sole view, most nearly conform to its needs as outlined in this RFP and then negotiate directly with that consultant to refine the proposal to achieve a contract that fully satisfies SEC needs.

About Southeast Conference

As the state and federally designated regional economic development organization for Southeast Alaska, Southeast Conference serves as the collective voice for advancing the region's economy. Southeast Conference has over 200 member organizations representing 1,200 people from 32 regional communities and 19 Tribes. The mission of Southeast Conference is to undertake and support activities that promote strong economies, healthy communities, and a quality environment in Southeast Alaska. Southeast Conference formed in 1958 with a group of people supporting the establishment of a regional transportation system in Southeast Alaska, which led to the formation of the Alaska Marine Highway System. After that success Southeast Conference stayed together through more than a half-century to focus on concerns unique to the region, including transportation, maritime, tourism, seafood, natural resources, health care, government, and overall quality of life.

ALASKA MARICULTURE CLUSTER

THEORY OF CHANGE



TARGETS

- 25% of Cluster resources to AK Native populations
- 25% of Cluster resources to underserved communities

ECONOMIC GOALS

- Grow a \$100 million industry in ten years and a \$325 million industry in 20 years
- 550 jobs in 10 years and 1,800 jobs in 20 years

KEY ASSUMPTIONS

- Public investments to de-risk the mariculture sector will catalyze sufficient private investment to spur industry growth
- Alaska is positioned to be a global leader in mariculture due to its ample coastline, existing seafood infrastructure, and workforce

Simultaneous investments and innovations throughout the value chain will overcome chicken-and-egg barriers

The AMC coalition can contribute to a new approach to equitable economic development

Mariculture business and job creation can be aligned with the lifeways of Alaska Native and rural residents in coastal Alaska