



## **Northeast Regional Ocean Council**

### **Request for Proposals:**

### **Characterization of Spatial Patterns of Commercial Fishing Activity in New England**

**RFP Issued: February 24, 2012**

**Proposals Due: March 20, 2012**

# Northeast Regional Ocean Council Request for Proposals: Characterization of Spatial Patterns of Commercial Fishing Activity in New England

## Part 1: Scope of Work

- 1. Statement of Purpose:** This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks contractor assistance to develop products characterizing spatial patterns of commercial fishing activity in marine waters of New England. For purposes of this RFP, the term “commercial fishing” includes the charter/head boat portion of the fishery. The Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) is seeking proposals to assist in implementing this component of its ocean planning work plan. Note that other aspects of NROC’s work plan are also being implemented that include working with other marine interests and information. Consistent with the NROC approach to ocean planning, this project will result in scientifically-sound products developed with appropriate review and discussion with the fishing industry, scientists, and managers.
- 2. Background:** NROC, established by New England’s Governors in 2005, is a state-federal partnership to implement solutions to New England’s most pressing ocean and coastal issues that require a regional response. NROC member states include Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont. Federal agencies, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of Interior (U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Homeland Security (U.S. Coast Guard), and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, have been full members of NROC since its inception.

In recent years, NROC has focused on ocean planning. NROC has led the New England region’s implementation of important parts of the National Ocean Policy and has developed a work plan and framework for regional ocean planning (see the NROC web site <http://collaborate.csc.noaa.gov/nroc/default.aspx>). Within the past 18 months, to help achieve its goals NROC has brought on additional capacity through hiring of staff and in-kind support from member agencies. Also, during this time NROC has worked with several partners on the Northeast Ocean Data Portal ([www.northeastoceandata.org](http://www.northeastoceandata.org)), an on-line repository for spatial data related to human activity and natural resources. Part of the data portal team’s effort has been to acquire existing data sets and begin to develop draft data products, for example from Vessel Trip Report (VTR) and Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) databases maintained by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

- 3. Objectives:** This RFP will directly support NROC’s work plan through its deliverables and engagement with the commercial fishing industry. For purposes of this RFP and the work NROC is

anticipating, the term “commercial fishing industry” includes the charter and party boat segment of the fishery. There are two main objectives that are part of this RFP:

- a. Work with NROC and the Northeast Ocean Data Portal Team to develop map products that will be reviewed by commercial fishing industry, scientists, and managers and that describe spatial patterns of commercial fishing activity in New England waters (generally, Gulf of Maine, Long Island and Block Island Sounds, south of Cape Cod and Islands). The end goal of NROC is to develop products that, following incorporation of input from external sources, will be suitable for the Northeast Ocean Data Portal and use in subsequent ocean planning activities. NROC has identified a couple of data sets for use in this project, but also welcomes responses that identify and describe other data sets and their value.
- b. Recognizing limitations with existing data, issues related to changing fishing activity related to historic (and future) fishery management decisions, and other considerations, develop and implement process to identify priority data gaps to address in the future, based on discussions with industry, scientists, and managers.

Note that NROC has other aspects of its work plan which are focused on other human uses, including recreational activities, as well as natural resources and ecosystem issues.

NROC anticipates that much of the responsibility of providing cartography services for the development of maps/products to be used for public review, and the technical skills necessary to incorporate revised products into the Northeast Ocean Data Portal, will be provided by the Northeast Ocean Data Portal Team. Responses to this RFP should not anticipate having to acquire “raw” data from existing sources (e.g., VMS or VTR) or provide a significant amount of geographic information systems staff time in their response. The ability to understand cartography and GIS techniques will be important, as well as the ability to understand fisheries-related data, since NROC anticipates working with a successful bidder who can help guide the development of draft products and who understands the potential data sets that would be in use.

Recognizing geographic differences in fisheries across New England, NROC encourages proposals to discuss how such differences will be addressed and proposes methods to ensure that the appropriate industry engagement occurs. Collaboration of entities to ensure appropriate coverage across the region is thus encouraged. There are opportunities to engage the fishing industry that vary from state to state (e.g., specific forums, organizations, and regularly scheduled meetings). Additionally, in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, there are existing, related state-wide efforts which are either underway or that have been employed during recent ocean planning activities. Other related efforts have included those undertaken by a group under contract with the Bureau of Offshore Energy Management, work in Maine through the Island Institute, recent oil spill planning activities in New Hampshire and southern Maine, and others. Respondents should describe their approach to building upon this existing work and incorporating other existing opportunities.

NROC intends that all products developed as part of this project will be developed through a transparent process that is scientifically-based and incorporates industry, scientific, and management input. Respondents should thus describe how they would meet these principles. NROC anticipates that a significant portion of the budget for this project will be for engaging with fishery industry, scientists, and managers. NROC recognizes that a combination of approaches may be necessary to achieve project objectives due to geography, the different fisheries involved (including the charter/head boat component), timing, and other considerations. Respondents should describe their approach to addressing such issues, subsequent level of effort anticipated for each state, and incorporate these considerations into their proposal.

Further information on the tasks intended to meet these objectives is provided below.

*Task 1: Conduct process to engage stakeholders to help NROC develop map products.* Sample data products on the Northeast Data Portal are derived from VTR data, but there are many other potential products which could be developed from VTR, VMS, or other/a combination of datasets. Other recent efforts in the region (e.g., related to the Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Plan, the Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan) have also developed related data products. The New England Fishery Management Council, New England states, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission are also other potential sources of information and/or input.

Respondents should discuss their approach to helping to develop draft products (maps) to meet Objective a and describe the products that would be proposed (including a discussion of data limitations related to the proprietary nature of such data, temporal and spatial scale issues, and the consideration of existing, spatial fishery management measures). Data sources beyond those mentioned in this RFP that are proposed for inclusion should be described and the rationale for their inclusion provided. As described previously, NROC anticipates partnering with a selected contractor on this work, and that much of the detailed cartographic and GIS-based work would be provided by the data portal team.

Accompanying map products will be a written description including caveats important to understand when reviewing any such product, clear descriptions of the information used to develop such a product, and the like. For example, spatial management measures such as closure areas are critical to understanding fishing patterns. Respondents should describe their approach to such an accompaniment.

*Task 2. Develop priorities for future work.* Existing data sources will include data gaps temporally, spatially, because they do not include certain fisheries, because they do not reflect current spatial fisheries management measures, or for other reasons. These issues all result in important caveats which must be understood when looking at any presentation of spatial patterns of fishing.

Understanding these issues will also help determine priorities for future work to fill such gaps. Proposals should describe of how these issues will be addressed in a process which achieves objective 2. NROC expects that successful completion of this objective will include descriptions of options to meet these priorities (including information related to level of effort based on approach). As is the case with Task 1, NROC intends that the work to achieve this objective will be accomplished through a transparent process that engages industry, managers, and scientists.

4. **Project Funding.** The maximum budget for this project is \$175,000. NROC reserves the right to re-allocate this funding if a satisfactory candidate for this service is not determined or the services are no longer needed. NROC also reserves the right to conduct future competitive solicitations for projects that may arise from the work completed as part of this project.
5. **Deliverables:** Proposals should include discussion of how the proposed approaches will successfully complete the following deliverables:
  - Detailed work plan
  - Monthly progress reports
  - Map products developed in coordination with NROC and the NROC data portal team. Note the relationship described in this RFP between NROC, the data portal team, and potential bidders.
  - Appropriate documentation, prepared for a general audience, describing products
  - Written document summarizing future priority data/information needs
6. **Project schedule:** NROC expects that work on this project will start immediately following completion of a contract. Generally, NROC would prefer a schedule that includes initial engagement with appropriate stakeholders in the spring of 2012 and, recognizing the practical challenges of successfully engaging the fishing industry during summer and early fall, extends into the fall of 2012 to finalize the review process of this initial work. NROC anticipates that final deliverables described in this RFP would be due by December 2012. Respondents should propose and justify a schedule that they feel is appropriate.

## Part 2: Proposal Preparation and Submittal

The following sections describe the procedures and content for submitting proposals.

1. **Pre-submittal conference call.** NROC will host a pre-submission conference call to allow potential respondents to ask clarifying questions on Wednesday, March 14, 2012. Instructions to participate in this conference call will be sent to all people who express their interest via email at least 24 hours before the conference call. Emails expressing such interest should be sent to [Proposal@northeastoceancouncil.org](mailto:Proposal@northeastoceancouncil.org).

**2. RFP clarification.** Questions and requests for clarifications regarding this solicitation should be sent to the email contact below. The deadline for submitting such an email is 5:00 pm Wednesday, March 14, 2012. Responses will be posted to the NROC web-site on Friday, March 16, 2012. Questions should be sent to:

[Proposal@northeastoceancouncil.org](mailto:Proposal@northeastoceancouncil.org)

John Weber, Ocean Planning Director  
Northeast Regional Ocean Council

**3. Submittal requirements.** For review purposes, NROC requires responses to this RFP to be delivered electronically, via email, as an Adobe™ .pdf file, to [Proposal@northeastoceancouncil.org](mailto:Proposal@northeastoceancouncil.org). Proposals must be received by email no later than 5:00 pm on Tuesday, March 20, 2012, and shall plainly identify the subject of the proposal and the name, phone, email, and address of the bidder.

It is the bidder's responsibility to ensure that NROC receives the proposals prior to the specified closing date. Proposals received after the specified closing date will not be considered.

**4. Content requirements.** Proposals must be clear, succinct and shall not exceed 10 pages. Section dividers, cover letter, title page, and table of contents do not count in the overall page count of the proposal. Exclusions to the page limitation may include relevant work samples and/or resumes, as described below, provided in appendices. Each bidder is required to describe how they will provide the deliverables described above as part of their proposal. Information provided will be evaluated and scored by NROC and, missing elements will adversely impact a proposal's overall score.

*a. General requirements:*

- i. Single-spaced pages when printed on 8.5" x 11" paper with 1-inch margins (top, bottom, left and right) with font not smaller than 11 point.
- ii. The total number of pages must not exceed 10 pages (not including appendices).
- iii. The proposal must be submitted as an Adobe™ .pdf document with all pages numbered and clearly identifying the name of the bidder.

*b. Proposal organization and content:*

- i. Cover letter. Provide a cover letter indicating your organization's commitment to implementing this initiative (.g. senior management approval, etc.). Also, include appropriate point of contact information, including the person's name, title, address, phone number and email address.
- ii. Table of contents. Identify page numbers of main sections, including any appendices.
- iii. Executive summary. Summarize the proposal's approach to completing the deliverables required by this RFP and highlight any competitive advantages or unique approaches of

your proposal, cost-effectiveness measures, and particular skills offered by the project team.

- iv. Implementation plan. Include a concise, yet detailed implementation plan for completing the deliverables described in this RFP and to ensure appropriate management of the scope, schedule, budget and overall quality of work. Include a time line showing implementation, starting from contract execution, including all major tasks and their sequence, inter-relationships and dependencies between tasks and key milestones and deliverables.
- v. Detailed budget. Provide an itemized budget to produce the deliverables described in this RFP. Include all costs related to personnel (identify estimated hours and rate), administrative overhead, travel, materials, equipment, and any other anticipated expenditures required to complete the work described in this RFP. In this budget description, describe leveraging of existing work, funding, or other in-kind services. Note that because of the requirements of the source of funding for this project, indirect costs are limited to a maximum of 12.5% of allowable direct costs. For purposes of this RFP, indirect costs are defined as “overhead expenses incurred by an organization but not easily tracked to a specific project. They generally include administrative or other support functions such as executive oversight, institutional communication networks, accounting, grants management, legal support, insurance, utilities, technology, rent, and facility maintenance.” For purposes of this RFP, direct costs include all of the expenses that are required for, and can be tracked directly to, this project, including but not limited to personnel, consultants/contractors, or other direct expenses such as travel, training, supplies, computers, and software.

The total budget is not to exceed \$175,000.

- vi. Team structure and qualifications. Please provide the following:
  - Project team organization chart, including a brief description of the role of each team member.
  - Summary of the experience, skill or unique attribute of each team member. Description of the team’s understanding of the technical aspects of this RFP will be very helpful in this summary. In addition, including a maximum two-page resume for each team member is allowable in a “resumes” appendix.
  - Summary of related, successful projects that illustrate the capabilities and qualifications of the project team. In addition, providing a maximum two-page description of up to two recently-completed projects is allowable in a “related experience” appendix. Include references that NROC may contact for these projects.

Proposals must identify any tasks which will be assigned to subcontractors and associated budget details include in part v above. The successful bidder will be required to not subcontract, assign, or transfer any listed responsibilities, without prior review and consent of NROC.

### **Part 3: Evaluation of Proposals**

This section summarizes the general process and criteria NROC intends to use to evaluate proposals.

1. **General review process.** The NROC Ocean Planning Director will collect and assemble all proposals received by the RFP deadline. An evaluation team comprised of NROC members and the NROC Ocean Planning Director will be convened to evaluate and score all proposals, using the criteria below. Upon completion of the scoring process, the evaluation team will recommend to the NROC Executive Committee that the highest scoring bidder be awarded the project.
2. **Criteria.** NROC will use score all proposals according to the following criteria:
  - a. *Approach (30%).* Bidders will be evaluated on the detail, clarity, and soundness of their approach to this project, including strategies for overcoming any potential obstacles, creativity, and cost effectiveness. Communication strategies for engaging with appropriate stakeholders during all aspects of this project will be a significant portion of this evaluation.
  - b. *Qualifications and experience of project team (30%).* NROC will evaluate a project team members' combination of education, training, and record of achievement and experience related to the tasks described in this RFP. Specific attention will also be focused on an assessment of a project team's direct experience with the fishing community and with engaging appropriate external stakeholders
  - c. *Cost Effectiveness (20%).* Bidders will be evaluated on the budget submitted with their responses to this RFP. Any leveraging of existing work, funding, or other in-kind services, will be a significant portion of this evaluation.
  - d. *Project Management (20%).* Bidders will be evaluated on their ability to complete the project within the schedule provided, track record of project management, and proposed project management strategies for this project. Because NROC is strongly urging teaming to address issues related to the geography of the project area (e.g., all of New England), this evaluation will also include an assessment of internal (within project team and between project team and NROC) communication/project management strategies which are proposed.

### **Part 4. General Provisions**

The following general provisions apply to this RFP and subsequent actions taken by NROC.

1. Response to this RFP does not commit NROC to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred during the preparation of the proposal.



2. NROC reserves the right to reject any or all of the proposals for completing this work. NROC also reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP at any time.
3. NROC reserves the right to eliminate the need for the selected bidders to complete one or more tasks, pending the outcome of preceding related tasks or issues, and/or the availability of project partners to complete that task.
4. NROC reserves the right to modify the final scope of work and deliverables prior to finalizing a contractual agreement with the selected bidder(s).
5. Subsequent procurement, if any, will be in accordance with an executed contract. This RFP and any response may, at NROC's discretion, become part of the executed contract.
6. All entities participating in this RFP process will be notified of acceptance or rejection. NROC reserves the right not to disclose reasons for the rejection. NROC is not obligated to accept the proposal with the lowest cost.
7. No publicity or media release about this RFP, response to this RFP, discussion of any kind related to this RFP, or the award of any contract related to the bid document, may be released without NROC's prior approval.
8. All materials submitted by bidders become the property of NROC. NROC will retain copies of all proposals for historical records and documentation.
9. Each Bidder agrees to comply with all federal regulations including those pertaining to non-discrimination in hiring and employment practices.
10. NROC owns all rights to deliverables and, within the bounds of acceptable practice as determined by limitations placed upon data used in this project by data providers, intends that products resulting from this project will be made publically available.