

ADVERTISEMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Department of Marine Resources is soliciting proposals to conduct a comprehensive analysis of marketing, business, and management strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of Maine's lobster fishery, and to increase profitability within the industry. This analysis will result in a set of strategic recommendations for the Maine lobster industry which will be used to inform the development of an action plan. The action plan will be designed to support industry innovation and the ongoing viability of coastal Maine communities and all sectors of the industry. A total of up to \$150,000 may be allocated for this project. More than one proposal may be selected.

A copy of the RFP detailing specifications may be obtained by contacting David Etnier by telephone (207 / 624-6553), by submitting a request in writing to Maine Department of Marine Resources, 21 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0021 or by downloading from the Internet at: www.maine.gov/dmr/rfp

Sealed proposals must be clearly labeled with the bidder's name and address and marked "Department of Marine Resources: Economic Sustainability of Maine's Lobster Industry 200812335" and received by **2:00 p.m. on January 20, 2009** at the Division of Purchases, 9 State House Station, 111 Sewall Street, 4th Floor Burton M. Cross Building, Augusta, Maine 04333-0009. Proposals will be publicly opened and the name of the bidder announced at the date, time and place specified above. No other information will be made public prior to evaluation and contract award notification. Proposals received after the date and time specified will not be considered. There are no exceptions. The State reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY OF MAINE'S LOBSTER INDUSTRY

I. Introduction

On October 24th, Governor Baldacci issued an Executive Order creating the Governor's Task Force on the Economic Sustainability of Maine's Lobster Industry (see Appendix B). The Executive Order directed the Task Force to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Maine's lobster industry, including a number of items that could create increased opportunity for the industry. The Executive Order further directed the Task Force to work with an independent contractor to conduct an analysis of the industry and to develop recommendations. Therefore, the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and the Task Force are seeking proposals to conduct such an analysis that will aid in the development of innovative and effective strategies to improve industry sustainability and profitability, recognizing both the importance of the lobster industry to Maine, and the regional and global context within which the industry operates.

II. Background Information

The American lobster resource supports the largest fishery in Maine and the Northeast. Maine landings in 2007 exceeded 63 million pounds valued at nearly \$281 million. Despite its importance to Maine's economy, participants in the lobster industry have long been aware that relative to other successful businesses, this industry operates on low gross margins. The industry has also faced challenges in capitalizing on the Maine lobster brand, expanding markets, and acquiring and holding pricing power.

These existing concerns were brought into sharp focus in the fall of 2008, when the boat price of lobster began a drastic decline, falling below \$2/lb in some parts of Maine. The sudden drop was attributed to a variety of factors, all linked to the generally worsening state of the global economy. Consumer demand is at its lowest level in over 40 years. Much of the processed, frozen lobster is purchased by cruise ships and casinos, which also had decreased demand. Limited credit availability as a result of the collapsing Icelandic banks impacted major Canadian processors. The magnitude of the direct impact on Maine's coastal economy is clear when compared to past years – based on port sampling data, it is estimated that the October lobster catch earned Maine fishermen less than \$20 million, down more than 67 percent from a high of more than \$60 million in October 2005.

Although there is little that could be done in the short-term to mitigate the forces that are negatively impacting the lobster industry, the sharp downturn highlighted the existing need to think strategically about the future of Maine's lobster industry. The Governor's Task Force has been charged with overseeing an outside contractor to conduct an analysis of the industry, reviewing the resulting recommendations, and developing an action plan that will achieve the goal of increasing profitability for the industry.

III. Project Description, Products and Work Schedule

The goal of this project is to develop strategies to improve the sustainability and profitability of Maine's lobster industry. Toward this end, the Task Force requests the contractor to conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The Task Force also requests the contractor to review the structure of lobster fisheries and markets in other locations (such as Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, the Caribbean, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand) to achieve a better understanding of our competitors, and Maine's position in the global marketplace. The consultant should also explore efforts that have been made historically

in Maine, or in fisheries elsewhere, to improve their place in the market, and describe what has been achieved as a result of those efforts. If the consultant is aware of other, non-fisheries related industries that may present useful models for the lobster industry, the Task Force would also be interested in learning from those models. The end product of the contractor's work will be a set of strategic recommendations for the Maine lobster industry which will be used to inform the development of an action plan. The action plan will be designed to support industry innovation and the ongoing viability of coastal Maine communities and all sectors of the industry.

Proposals should describe:

- the scope of the research and analysis proposed, and the methodology that will be followed;
- an outreach strategy for gathering information from industry members;
- a work schedule that provides the date work will begin, clear milestones and delivery date for end products (please note that the Task Force is scheduled to conclude their work by April 15th, 2009); and
- the credentials of the applicant that render them qualified to carry out the proposed project.

The contractor will work closely with the Task Force throughout their research and the development of their recommendations. The contractor will be required to attend meetings of the Task Force in which the Task Force is receiving information from industry or academic presenters. The contractor will be required to present interim or final project results at the request of the Task Force, including at the Maine Fishermen's Forum in March 2009.

The Department must receive one hard copy final report and one electronic final report of the deliverable product as specified in the proposal, by a date specified in the contract. Electronic reports are to be sent to Deirdre.Gilbert@maine.gov.

A maximum of \$150,000 may be allocated toward this project.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

If you obtained this RFP through a means other than requesting it directly from David Etnier, you must provide him with your contact information, if you intend to submit a proposal for consideration (207/624-6553 or David.Etnier@maine.gov). This is to ensure that you will receive the answers to any questions that may be raised during the application process, as described under #2 below. If you do not provide your contact information, your proposal can not be considered.

The proposal submitted must contain the following information, responses or confirmations.

General Information

1. Three (3) copies of each bidder's proposal must be submitted clearly labeled with the bidder's name and address and marked "Department of Marine Resources: Economic Sustainability of Maine's Lobster Industry" in a sealed envelope by 2:00 p.m., January 20, 2009 to:

State of Maine, Department of Administrative and Financial Services

Bureau of General Services, Division of Purchases

9 State House Station

111 Sewall Street

4th Floor Burton M. Cross Building

Augusta, Maine 04333-0009

Proposals will be publicly opened and the name of the bidder announced at the date, time and place specified above. No other information will be made public prior to evaluation and contract award notification. Proposals received after the date and time specified will not be considered. There are absolutely no exceptions.

2. Bidders should direct written questions regarding these specifications to David Etnier, 21 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0021 or via email at:

David.Etnier@maine.gov.

All bidders will receive copies of responses to relevant questions raised by other bidders. Questions received after January 7, 2009 will not be answered. Phone

inquiries, except for an initial request for a copy of the RFP, will not be accepted and such calls may deem a proposal invalid.

3. Proposals must be presented in the format requested in this material. All questions should be answered and all instructions followed explicitly. Deviations from these instructions must be identified and are submitted at the risk of the proposal being ruled invalid.
4. The State of Maine will not accept responsibility for any costs incurred by a bidder in the preparation of their proposal.
5. The competitive bidding process involves the following steps and timetable:
 - ☒ Publication of specifications – December 30, 2008
 - ☒ Deadline for prospective bidders' proposals – 2:00 p.m., January 20, 2009
6. Selections will be based on the following criteria:
 - 25 points Proposed costs;
 - 25 points Demonstrated experience;
 - 50 points Proposal specifications.

The State reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. The State reserves the right to require interviews with key personnel of bidders prior to contract award. Members of the evaluation team will include various individuals from the Department of Marine Resources and the Task Force.

7. The State reserves the right to renew any contractual agreements as a result of this RFP based on mutually agreeable terms for two terms of one year each.
8. Failure of the bidder to honor commitments made in this RFP may constitute grounds for bidder disqualification. The resulting contracts will take the form of a "State of Maine Agreement to Purchase Services" (See Appendix A). The State of Maine will not entertain the use of a bidder written contract. After selection of the contractor, the State will allow the bidder to have a constant opportunity to reduce the total cost for individual items in the event that marketing, technological and other changes deem it advisable. Otherwise, the price stated in the proposal will remain in effect for the duration of the contract.

Proposal Contents

1. All proposals must be typewritten. Changes or corrections must be initialed by the person making the change.
2. The proposal must include detail on the experience and knowledge required as previously stated, including a description of experience.
3. Include a description of your company's experience, understanding and ability to provide services as previously described. If possible provide two examples of specific recent projects of this nature with which you have been involved. This may include prior agreements with the State of Maine.
4. All submissions by bidders will be considered available for public view following the bid award, subject to the Freedom of Access Laws of the State of Maine (1 MRSA 401). Confirm your understanding of this requirement by including the statement "I understand that my bid will be available for public view following the bid award." in your proposal.

5. Proposals must be signed by a person legally authorized to bind the bidder and must contain a statement that the proposal and fees contained therein will remain firm for a period of at least 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening. The State expects to hold the successful bidder to specified fees.

COST PROPOSAL

The successful bidder will:

1. Provide a fixed cost proposal to deliver the research and final product previously detailed. The Department reserves the right to negotiate the final grant amount and associated deliverables. Proposals lacking complete and adequate information will not be considered. Multiple grants could be awarded based on prospective bidders responses.
2. Provide a sample invoice that would be used to report and bill for work performed.

APPENDIX A

RIDER G
PROVISION OF CONTRACT SERVICES BY FOREIGN NATIONALS OR WORK
PERFORMED ABROAD

The Maine Legislature has asked the Division of Purchases¹ to determine the country where contracted services will be performed.

The following contract/amendment has been executed with the State of Maine.

1	Division of Purchases Contract Reference
2	Contractor Name
< highlight and enter the Name of the Contractor >	
3	Brief Contract Service Description
< highlight and enter a Brief Description of the Service Provided >	

So that we may comply with the Legislature's request, please provide responses to the following questions. To successfully complete the questionnaire be alert for follow-up entries if certain responses are made. Please show your responses in the spaces provided. You may mark any box with ☒ using your computer, keyboard & mouse. Highlight the box (☐) with your cursor and type a lowercase "x." If additional entries are needed, type to the right of the mark (>) shown in questions 1 and 3.

1. Will any of the services described in the contract's scope of work be performed outside of the United States of America?

☐ No. *Go to Q.3.*

☐ Yes. *If "Yes," show in what country(ies) below and Continue w/ Q.2 and Q3.*

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2. If you responded "Yes," above, who will perform any of the services described in the contract's scope of work?

☐ Citizens of the USA living abroad. ☐ Foreign nationals.

3. In what US state or foreign country is your firm incorporated?

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Name of the Person Submitting the Information	Voice Phone Number

Thank you for completing this information. You may send the completed form by email to the Division of Purchases [Jerry.Nault@maine.gov] or return it by telephone facsimile [207/287-6578] in addition to a response by regular post [9 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0009].

Notification of Changes to the Information

A provision of the Resolve requires service providers to notify the Division of Purchases of any changes to this information. That notification may be sent to the address shown above and should reference the Purchases File Number.

¹ Resolve, Chapter 16, First Special Session-2005.