



Request for Proposals

A cooperative transportation, logistics, and cold storage needs assessment across coastal Maine

Issue Date: January 30, 2025

Closing Date: March 14, 2025

1. SEA MAINE BACKGROUND

The Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine ([SEA Maine](#)) is an industry-led initiative committed to growing Maine's seafood economy by implementing projects that will ensure a vibrant, innovative, and resilient marine economy. SEA Maine brings together leaders from aquaculture and commercial fishing to identify strategies and targeted investments to help transition our heritage seafood economy into a modern engine for sustainable economic and job growth.

Phase One of SEA Maine, supported by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, Maine Technology Institute, and FocusMaine, resulted in a [roadmap](#) published in March 2024.

SEA Maine is currently funded through a climate resilience grant awarded to the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association in 2024 as part of the [Climate Resilience Grant Challenge](#).

The SEA Maine Steering Committee, co-chaired by Togue Brawn of Downeast Dayboat and Bailey Train of Bristol Seafood, includes approximately 35 members located across the state including industry, associations, nonprofits, academia, state agencies, and Maine's federal delegation. Maine Development Foundation serves as the project manager for SEA Maine, will coordinate the RFP and selection process, and will serve as the primary contact for the winning consultant.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Resilient Maine project, funded by NOAA and managed through GOPIF, will allow Maine to accelerate and expand its leadership on climate action by working with communities to take strong, pragmatic steps to address vulnerabilities, protect people, and ensure critical infrastructure is prepared for future impacts. Focus areas of the grant include:

- Expanding support to communities through the [Community Resilience Partnership](#), which now works with 226 towns, cities, and tribal governments across the state to support planning and projects to address climate effects, based on priorities identified by local leaders and citizens.
- Supporting investments in critical infrastructure projects through the [Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund \(MIAF\)](#), the state's primary program for identifying, funding, and completing significant construction projects to address serious climate impacts.
- Expanding ongoing efforts to preserve and protect vital working waterfronts and businesses, which experienced unprecedented damage in the January 2024 storms, and support efforts to protect vulnerable coastal and inland ecosystems through natural climate solutions, flood modeling, and community support.
- Establishing a resiliency office within state government, dedicated to leading cross-agency efforts to enhance climate resilience across the state, especially in communities with significant climate vulnerabilities impacting residents, infrastructure, and the environment.

The grant supports Maine's position as a national leader in climate resilience among rural states, and the bold goals outlined in [Maine Won't Wait](#), the state's award-winning climate action plan, to make Maine more resilient to climate impacts, foster economic opportunity and prosperity through climate action, and advance equity through Maine's climate response.

3. PROJECT PURPOSE AND DELIVERABLES

Purpose:

SEA Maine would like to identify the highest priority investments for energy-efficient¹ construction and/or conversions that will centralize distribution, build resilience to economic and environmental shocks, and create a more accessible and sustainable model for growing marine living resource (MLR) businesses. We seek a consultant to research needs and opportunities for cooperative transportation, logistics, and cold

¹ Energy efficiency includes such things as heating and cooling systems, energy sources, weatherization, construction methods, materials, location, size, and any other systems used to manage a method of transportation, storage, or logistics.

storage across coastal Maine that will support small businesses in accessing existing and new markets.

The consultant should have experience in some or all the following areas:

- Transportation, logistics, and warehousing, particularly cold chain
- The MLR sector
- Broader food systems

Deliverables:

SEA Maine is looking for practical, prioritized, and sequenced recommendations and proposed locations for centralized energy-efficient transportation, logistics, and cold storage construction and/or conversions in public or private facilities that will: a) provide access to other companies for shared use, b) support accessible and sustainable growth for Maine’s MLR businesses, and c) provide greater resilience to climate-related shocks. Details on financial and resource requirements must be included.

Key considerations:

- What is economically viable across the sector?
- Where are opportunities to scale and grow?
- What are some innovative ways to creatively solve logistics and transportation issues?

It will be important to: a) engage a diversity of seafood companies, including multiple species (shellfish, finfish, seaweed), business size (from sole proprietors to larger employers), and maturity level (from startups/entrepreneurs to well-established firms), and b) to evaluate a number of Maine communities for potential facility siting, based on logistics considerations, proximity to harvest sites and food processing facilities, and community support.

In support of this deliverable, the consultant will do the following:

- **Literature review.**
 - a. What is the current state of research into transportation, logistics, and cold storage in Maine?
 - b. Assess how other similar states/regions/nations have addressed these needs in their MLR sector.
 - c. Assess, to the extent possible, any potential impacts from the new administration’s policies.
 - d. Develop conclusions and next steps for Maine based on the existing studies.

Please see the [SEA Maine Reports and Tools](#) page for a list of all the studies undertaken during the first phase of our work. Consultants will be expected to

reference and build on this foundational work. Specifically, this needs assessment is a follow-up to the [Marine Living Resource Needs and Opportunities in Transportation and Logistics Report](#) and the [Marine Living Resources Transportation and Logistics Dashboard](#).

In addition, please review relevant seafood, aquaculture, and/or transportation reports prepared by the State of Maine's Domestic Trade Program ([Data Reports | Department of Economic and Community Development](#)), the [Blue Economy Task Force report](#), and [Cultivating Prosperity: A Strategic Plan for Growing Maine's Food Economy](#).

- **Develop a baseline of what exists and where, relying as much as possible on existing studies from the literature review and focusing on what is missing from prior work and what needs to be completed or updated.** Some guiding questions might be:
 - a. Which existing companies can support cross-dock and transfers?
 - b. What is the overall volume, species breakdown, and seasonality?
 - c. Consideration of transportation in and out of Maine AND within Maine itself.
 - d. Greater detail specifically around the new Portland cold storage facility-- what are its capacity and operations expected to look like?
 - e. What was learned about cold storage during the COVID-19 pandemic and how might that be relevant for the MLR sector?

- **Refine an understanding of the transportation, logistics, and cold storage needs for Maine in the MLR sector.** Some questions to consider include:
 - a. What are the best practices for cold storage for the sector?
 - b. Is there a need for refrigeration, freezing, or both?
 - c. How much square footage and/or pallets of cold storage space is needed?
 - d. Where on the coast is it most needed?
 - e. What types of energy sources can be used to power any proposed projects, at what cost?
 - f. How can the MLR economy connect to Maine's food economy more broadly—where are the opportunities and potential for collaboration?
 - g. Could land held by the Land Bank Authority and/or brownfield sites be tapped as potential locations for cold storage?
 - h. Are there feasible structures available that could be repurposed?
 - i. Consider how AI or other technologies, systems, or tools could create cost efficiencies.

- **Investigate common preconceptions that may be getting in the way of progress.** For example:
 - a. Do aggregators make sense for Maine seafood?

- b. Investigate the assumption that seafood can't/shouldn't be combined with other types of agriculture.
 - c. Investigate the idea of shared use space/co-packing space and/or seasonal collaborations.
 - d. Can/should bait storage be considered as a possible complementary product?
- **What constraints/obstacles are preventing progress on transportation, logistics, and cold storage infrastructure?** For example:
 - a. "Lack of volume" is frequently mentioned as a key problem. What's preventing us from producing enough volume? Regulations? Mother Nature? Infrastructure?
 - b. Ice supply has been suggested as a major constraint due to [Vibrio regulations](#). Is this an accurate statement, and if so, is there a way to address this need?
 - c. What is the current capacity of Maine's power grid and what will be needed to expand cold storage? Can solar support cold storage? Include cost considerations and estimates to build a realistic picture of the resources needed.
 - d. What is needed to support resiliency in the face of climate change? For example, power loss or road closures after storms.
 - **What are potential investors looking for and how do we incentivize carriers to come into Maine?**

Example of relevant materials to be provided as part of the final report:

- GIS Maps
- Quantitative Data Tables
- Coded/Tagged Qualitative Data
- Summaries and analyses
- Additional resource listings

We encourage consultants to think outside the box—don't let this outline limit you.

All studies must be designed to be relevant to Maine. SEA Maine participants will assist the consultant in the collection of relevant data and making introductions to sector members. SEA Maine will also assist the consultants in the identification of data sources and other relevant resources.

Logistics

We expect the research and reporting process to be collaborative and iterative.

Consultants will meet regularly with representatives from SEA Maine to ensure tight project management, make timely decisions, and glean insights from both SEA Maine and the consultant.

- Weekly with project manager as the study gets going, biweekly or as needed once things are underway
- Monthly with co-chairs and project manager
- Regular updates to Steering Committee as determined by co-chairs and project manager (by Zoom)

Consultants will also submit a quarterly progress report with a budget overview.

Proposals must not exceed \$96,000 in cost.

4. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND PROJECT TIMELINE

All responses to this RFP are due electronically by 5:00 pm EST on March 14, 2025 to Anne Schlitt: aschlitt@mdf.org. Please use “SEA Maine RFP response” in the subject line.

Questions concerning the project must be submitted by 12:00 pm, February 28, 2025. If any questions are received, an FAQ will be posted to the [SEA Maine website on the RFPs page](#) by March 4, 2025

Evaluation of proposals will be completed no later than April 30, 2025.

Upon selection of a successful applicant contract negotiations will begin immediately.

Project Timeline

April 30, 2025:	Winning consultant notified
May – October 2025:	Study in progress
October 31, 2025:	First draft due
December 5, 2025:	Final draft due

5. BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS AND PROPOSAL MATERIALS

Proposals will be accepted until 5:00 PM, March 14, 2025. Proposals must be no longer than 10 pages including a project narrative that clarifies the proposed study method, an itemized project budget, a budget justification, an example study outline, a list of proposed resources and references to be used in the generation of the studies, and a project timeline. Respondent qualifications and references may be submitted in addition to the 10-page limit and should include any experience with logistics and transportation studies. Overhead charges, if assessed, will need to be justified, and submitters should

keep in mind this is a competitive project. Specific contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon the determination of the selected proposal.

Suggested proposal outline:

- A. Detailed description of the methodology being proposed
- B. Work program outline detailing:
 - a. Tasks to be performed
 - b. When each will be completed (timeline)
 - c. Tentative allocation of person days by task
 - d. Schedule of work products
- C. Methods the Consultant proposes to use to manage the project and communicate with SEA Maine as to project progress and reviews
- D. Identification of key personnel to be assigned to the project and their roles, with resumes of all key personnel
- E. Budget: including hourly rates (inclusive of overhead and profit) for personnel or personnel categories.
- F. Timeline
- G. Data expected to be provided by SEA Maine

Proposals will be rated on:

- The overall proposal suitability (20 points)
- Organizational experience (20 points)
- Value and cost (20 points)
- Practicality and quality of recommendations (20 points)
- Additional considerations (20 points)

Thank you for your interest in working on this needs assessment for SEA Maine. Please contact us at aschlitt@mdf.org if you plan to submit a proposal. We greatly look forward to hearing from you.