

Governance, Coordination and Outreach Component Narrative

1. Program Description and Scope of Work

a. Executive Summary

The Governance, Coordination and Outreach Component is designed to fulfill these three essential functions of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster. The project lead is the Southeast Conference (SEC), the federally recognized Economic Development District (EDD) for Southeast Alaska. The Alaska Mariculture Alliance (AMA), the four other Alaska regional EDDs, and four representatives of regional tribal governments will be the primary partners in this component.

Coordination and governance will be under the leadership of regionally-balanced set of industry stakeholders that will ensure statewide coordination between seed suppliers and users, issue annual requests for proposals from eligible applicants under EDA given the Equity Engagement Goals described in the overarching narrative that allow time for planning among underserved populations and communities, review proposals received, award proposals, as well as provide guidance in project decision-making. The Governance Body will also monitor progress on project outcomes, as well as regularly evaluate participation of underserved populations and communities. The administrative elements of grant management will be carried out by the staff at SEC and the other three regional EDD's listed as project partners.

The outreach element will begin with the creation of a communications and engagement plan which will identify stakeholder groups and target audiences, develop public opinion research tools to initially measure and regularly gauge the level of social license surrounding mariculture development in Alaska, and identify outreach strategies for effectively engaging target audiences while integrating interactive social research. This coordinated plan will then be implemented by all the partners, including the four regional mariculture coordinators/catalysts.

b. Scope of Work

Governance:

- Identify and formalize the membership and structure of the Governance Body (GB).
 - Deliverables: membership commitments; identification of GB mission and elements of governance; diagram of GB structure; identification of responsibility for governance elements; number of meetings held.
- Identify the GB's annual responsibilities for implementation of component projects, grant decisions, grant management, compliance and reporting, and assignments to Southeast Conference and other EDDs for implementation of those responsibilities.
 - Deliverables: quarterly updated listing of task development and implementation, grants, identified grant reports and schedule for completion, listing of funding recommendations, annual reports, all with identification of responsible parties.

Outreach:

- Develop an RFP seeking the creation of a communications and engagement plan developed in coordination with the GB, which includes developing messaging tailored to the targeted groups in the four regions and audiences identified in the executive summary, and identification of specific strategies and partners to implement the plan.

- Deliverables: The RFP, hired contractor, written communications and engagement plan, including outreach plans for targeted groups and audiences.
- Identify stakeholder groups and audiences.
 - Deliverables: listing and description of those groups and target audiences.
- Develop an RFP seeking four regional individuals to serve as mariculture outreach coordinators to underserved populations and communities, and select those coordinating entities, one for each of the regions represented by the partner EDDs.
 - Deliverables: The RFP, followed by the selection of the four outreach coordinators.
- Implement communications and engagement plan.
 - Deliverables: Outreach materials; regular reports on outreach activities and participation.
- Evaluate outcomes of outreach plans.
 - Deliverables: Development and implementation of evaluation tools to measure the degree of participation by underserved populations and communities in mariculture, and the impact of that participation.

2. Regional Industry Assets and Needs

a. Regional Description

Each component of this cluster is focused on the four southern regions of coastal Alaska (Southeast (SE), Prince William Sound (PWS), Kenai Peninsula (KP), Southwest (SW)) due to the location of the waters appropriate for mariculture development, as well as the existing seafood industry participants and interested workforce, infrastructure, and vessels which already operate and move across communities to access fishery resources. See attached separate FIPS code spreadsheet as directed by EDA staff.

Alaska comprises more than half of the US coastline, continental shelf, and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and is a world leader in seafood production; over 60% of the seafood harvested in the US comes from Alaska waters. Therefore, Alaska has the coastline and infrastructure to support growth of its mariculture industry. Alaska's over 250 rural coastal communities are largely inaccessible by road and have limited employment opportunities. Many of these communities have high numbers of Alaska Native residents, who make up 22% of the state's population on average. The communities in these coastal regions have the need and desire to build ocean-related businesses, diversifying opportunities for residents to live and work in their communities in an industry that is beneficial to the environment and complementary to commercial and subsistence fishing.

b. Industry, Employer, and CEDS alignment

Mariculture development is a priority in state and regional development efforts and as well as aligning with the [Alaska Mariculture Development Plan](#), this cluster also aligns with the CEDS for each of the EDDs ([SEC](#) - pgs. 2, 11, 24, 41-43, [PWSEDD](#) – pgs. 8, 32, 41, 44, 58, [KPEDD](#) – pgs. 39-50, [SWAMC](#) – pgs. 1, 4, 5, 7), and the State of Alaska (pgs. 2, 11, 24, 41-43). References to supporting the mariculture industry in AMC coalition members' CEDS include:

- KPEDD CEDS: "Objective 4.4, Support emerging sectors with high growth potential: assist mariculture operations in meeting capital and expansion needs" (2021).

- PWSEDD CEDS: supporting the Sound’s Blue Economy is central to its vision statement, and Priority Objective (C.)(1.)(a.) states “attract investment in PWS mariculture by facilitating relationships with prospective kelp and shellfish farmers, buyers and processors” (2021).
- Southeast Conference’s 2025 CEDS identifies Mariculture Development as its top priority in its Seafood and Maritime sector (2020).
- SWAMC 2019 CEDS: “educate, advocate and assist in the development of the mariculture industry to diversify rural economies”.

A major regional asset for attaining this project’s vision and goal is the significant scale of Alaska’s existing seafood industry, the State’s largest employer. Alaska produces more seafood than the rest of the US, and if Alaska were a country it would be in the top 10 for seafood production. The existing infrastructure, workforce, markets, and the Alaska Seafood brand can be utilized in the development of the mariculture industry and provide more job opportunities to a large existing workforce. Alaska also enjoys a global reputation for sustainably managed fisheries resources that the state’s mariculture products would share and enhance.

3. Proposed Solution

This component addresses the need for governance, coordination, and outreach by creating, funding and implementing the program’s Governance Body and ensuring that governance is applied across all four regions in a systematic manner, and is undertaken in an equitable and sustainable framework. The Governance Body will identify, clarify, monitor and evaluate the tasks included in the overall program and will have the ultimate responsibility to ensure program goals are implemented.

In addition, this component addresses the central need for outreach, public education and engagement in coastal regions, including underserved communities and populations, regarding mariculture development. This is directly linked to the need for social license (public support and acceptance) in order to develop mariculture operations in public waters governed by the state and federal government. No new endeavor or industry succeeds unless there is acceptance and enthusiasm in the local areas served. Perceptions and social license are driven by information and how it is delivered, and this component will focus on guiding that information transfer and gauging its success.

4. Partners and Program Outreach

a. Partnerships.

The list of partners below have previously worked cooperatively toward mariculture development goals, particularly in the work of the previous Mariculture Task Force (2016-2021). the creation of the mariculture CEDS, and the Alaska Mariculture Development Plan. The following partner organizations will contribute to outreach and may be part of governance.

- **Alaska Mariculture Alliance:** A growing mariculture industry association that will help coordinate Alaska Mariculture Cluster component projects.
- **Regional economic development districts:** regional EDDs are facilitating partnerships and investment in kelp and shellfish farming assets. EDDs will likely serve on the Governance Body for this component, and SE Conference will lead on governance.

Regional Tribal government representatives potentially serving on Governance Body (4):

- **Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska:** Southeast Alaska tribal government that will help with outreach to underserved populations and communities.
- **Sustainable Southeast Partnership:** A collaborative uniting diverse skills and perspectives to strengthen cultural, ecological, and economic resilience across Southeast Alaska. SSP will help with outreach to and engagement with underserved populations and communities in Southeast Alaska.
- **Chugach Regional Resource Commission:** Commission of tribes in the Chugach region promoting tribal sovereignty through participation in natural resource decision-making processes that will help with outreach to underserved populations and communities.
- **Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute:** A coalition of Alaska Native tribes working on agriculture and mariculture development among other efforts in the many small, remote villages of the Kodiak region. KALI will help with outreach to and engagement with underserved populations and communities.
- **Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association:** Aleut tribal organization promoting self-sufficiency and independence of the Unangan/Unangas (Aleut) people by advocacy, training, technical assistance, and economic enhancement, will help with outreach to and engagement with underserved populations and communities.

b. Promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Alaska is home to 40% of the total U.S. tribal population, including the largest of the 229 federally recognized tribes in Alaska, the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida), which is a Coalition member of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster. According to July 2020 census data, of the total 221,682 people that live in the 25 Borough/Census Areas that border Alaska's coastline (not including upper Cook Inlet), 82,608 or 37% of people identify as Alaska Native or American Indian either alone or in combination with other racial designations. This project is well positioned to support equitable opportunities through the development of mariculture because of the geographic overlay between this project's region, Alaska Native communities, and coastal Alaska.

Rural coastal communities in Alaska face a multitude of challenges. This includes limited economic opportunities, a high cost of living stemming from long distance transportation routes, and an extreme climate undergoing rapid change. A significant number of these communities are dependent on fishing for income and subsistence. Recent extreme fluctuations in fish stocks have resulted in greater uncertainty for their livelihoods.

The positive economic benefits of mariculture development will be focused in coastal Alaska communities in the regions of the four participating EDDs (SE, PWS, KP, and SW Alaska). These are some of the most rural and historically underserved communities in the U.S. with low income and limited access to jobs and economic opportunities. The outreach component of the program will assist in transferring information and opportunity to these coastal communities.

Alaska Native communities are losing access to commercial fisheries as limited entry permits and quota shares are transferred to other owners or migrate to larger cities. The development of the mariculture industry provides an opportunity during new resource development to address these inequities by prioritizing tribal and Alaska Native leadership, ownership and participation in mariculture, as well as providing services such as training,

financing, and other business development to support equitable opportunity. These opportunities will be communicated through the outreach program, and participation encouraged in multiple ways.

The overall proposal sets **Equity Engagement Goals** which will be the measuring stick for progress towards the commitment to equitable opportunities. The first and second goals will be: 1) to provide at least 25% of the project services directly to underserved populations (Alaska Natives), and 2) to provide at least 25% of the project services directly to underserved communities. These services include access to shellfish and seaweed seed, workforce development, jobs, capital for investment through financing instruments such as revolving loan funds, CDFIs, or other non-traditional options, vessel energy efficiency improvements, social license, coordination and industry sharing of best practices. The third goal will be to indirectly provide services through local improvements to underserved populations and underserved communities.

The **Equity Engagement Goals** will be met through the broad network represented by the Coalition and Partners, which includes four tribes (one regional) and two Alaska Native Regional Corporations, representing over 40,000 tribal citizens or shareholders. The project's network will expand upon already existing partnerships engaged in mariculture development, which have allowed relationship and trust building between entities. In particular, the Alaska Native entities (tribes, corporations and nonprofits) will provide critical contacts and access to these underserved populations, which many times have less technology resources to communicate remotely. Many Alaska Native villages and other rural communities lack access to broadband internet service which poses a significant barrier to business development.

5. Measurable Goals and Impacts

For the Governing Body, the overall goal is to create a structure of cooperation and coordination to provide prudent guidance for investment decisions that considers economic as well as social planning, on a local, regional and statewide basis. Outputs include: membership commitments; identification of GB mission and elements of governance; diagram of GB structure; identification of responsibility for governance elements; number of meetings held; monthly updated listing of task development and implementation, grants, identified grant reports and schedule for completion, listing of funding recommendations, annual reports, all with identification of responsible parties.

For the Outreach efforts of this component, the overall goal is continued and improved public acceptance and support for mariculture development. Specific impacts will include farm lease application submissions and approvals at similar or increased rates as seen in 2017-2021. Outputs include: listing and description of stakeholder groups and target audiences; development of RFP seeking mariculture outreach coordinators and select those coordinating entities; targeted outreach plans for groups and audiences, specific to the four geographical regions; regular reports on outreach activities and participation; development and implementation of evaluation tools to measure the degree of participation by underserved populations and communities in mariculture, and the impact of that participation.

As a whole, the component projects and complimentary work planned by the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) is estimated to result in the creation of 318 jobs and \$42 million in private investment leveraged by the final year of the grant period. The AMC programs are

collectively estimated to move Alaska's mariculture industry from a status quo growth trajectory (annual economic output of \$4.7 million at year 4 and \$10.8 million in Year 10) to a mid-case growth trajectory (economic output of \$22.6 million at year 4 and \$98.3 million in Year 10).

6. Sustainability Plan

Mariculture is a renewable resource which will be sustainably managed under the protection of the Alaska Constitution which requires resource managers to use sustainability principles providing for a renewable resource. This adds confidence that any development efforts and investment will continue to add incremental economic activity in the region into the future.

Of major importance to the sustainability of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster is the support received to date from the State of Alaska and NOAA Fisheries. Beyond support received from EDD and CEDS (see above), the previous two Governors have had public initiatives to support the industry, two mariculture bill signing ceremonies, as well as budgeting for two new staff positions in the Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources and one within the University of Alaska. Additionally, NOAA Fisheries hired a Regional Aquaculture Coordinator in the Alaska Region, a new position for Alaska. These new positions will provide long-term capacity and stability to development efforts. NOAA also created the Alaska Aquaculture Permitting Portal, which houses all information regarding public lease and permit requirements to start a new farm. This allows an improved permitting process and success rates to acquire leases.

The network of connections will continue to expand during the project period, including the membership and capacity of the AMA and the Mariculture Research and Training Center (MRTC). These two entities will provide the long-term structure necessary for continuity after the project period ends. The AMA provides leadership and longevity to mariculture development, while providing for coordination across a broad spectrum of stakeholders. The MRTC is the central entity for coordinating mariculture research and training activities, furthering information sharing and efficient use of resources toward the statewide vision and goal. Lack of coordination was identified as a systemic problem and barrier to continued growth in the Task Force's comprehensive plan. The structure of the AMA and MRTC are designed to link industry priorities for mariculture development with research and training activities provided across the state. The MRTC has an ex-officio seat on the AMA Board, and the AMA serves as an industry advisory group to the MRTC for setting research priorities. See the diagram in the overarching narrative which summarizes the connections of major stakeholder groups and how the AMA and MRTC structure will provide long-term support and coordination.

Demonstration of successful and profitable new mariculture businesses will also be integral to long-term continuation of mariculture development. Much of this is dependent upon the breakdown of chicken-or-egg stages of development which is what this integrated multi-component project intends to do. This is particularly important in the supply chain connection between product development, market demand, processing capacity and farm production. All four of these supply chain segments need to be developed and grown together for success to be achieved.

Optional Template for BBBRC Phase 2 Primary Service Area County List

BBBRC Phase 2 applicants may use this template to list the counties in their primary service areas, which is required as part of both the Overarching Narrative (see p. 21 of the NOFO) and the project narratives of all Component Applications (see p. 23 of the NOFO).

<https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-files.2019.html>

Overarching Narrative	"A description (~1 page) of the project's location and region, including a definition of its primary service area by counties. Counties should be identified by both name and 5-digit FIPS codes. See https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-files.2019.html . The description of the region should include identify the communities served and a description of the target participants served and stakeholders engaged. The description also include the identification of assets in the region critical to the success of the regional growth cluster. The location regions should directly correspond to Questions 14 and 16 of Form SF-424 as submitted in each constituent component project. If applicable, also provide information demonstrating that the project is in or directly benefits a coal community. NOFO p. 21.
Component Application Project Narratives	"Section 2a: A description of the component project's location and region. The locations and regions should directly correspond to Questions 14 and 16 of Form SF-424 and align with the information provided in the Overarching Narrative. If the applicant expects impacts beyond the noted region, the applicant should note the region of expected impact. Additionally, applicants must identify their proposed primary service area(s) by county or counties. Counties should be identified by both name and 5-digit FIPS codes. See https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-files.2019.html p. 23.

FIPS Code	County / County Equivalent Name
02013	Aleutians East Borough
02016	Aleutians West Census Area
02060	Bristol Bay Borough
02070	Dillingham Census Area
02100	Haines Borough
02105	Hoonah-Angoon Census Area
02110	Juneau City and Borough
02122	Kenai Peninsula Borough
02130	Ketchikan Gateway Borough
02150	Kodiak Island Borough
02164	Lake and Peninsula Borough
02195	Petersburg Borough
02198	Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area
02220	Sitka City and Borough
02230	Skagway Municipality
02275	Wrangell City and Borough
02282	Yakutat City and Borough
02261	Valdez-Cordova Census Area