

## **SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES FUND**

### **Program Overview and Letter of Inquiry (LOI) Guidelines**

#### **I. Introduction**

Resources Legacy Fund (RLF) established the Sustainable Fisheries Fund (SFF) in 2002 to promote ecologically sustainable fishing practices by supporting fishery improvement efforts of small-scale and strategically positioned fisheries, using the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification process as the primary tool. In 2013, RLF revised its strategy to place greater emphasis on multi-fishery pre-assessment projects and the design and initiation of fishery improvement projects (FIPs). As of 2018, RLF will consider proposals to support sustainability assessments or improvements for fisheries aiming to achieve Fair Trade certification as a step towards performance consistent with the MSC standard, as well.

#### *Eligible Projects*

RLF is currently seeking the following types of projects for funding consideration, in order of priority:

- MSC Pre-assessments and Fair Trade audits;
- Design and initiation of basic and comprehensive Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs), consistent with [Conservation Alliance FIP definitions](#), including development of a budget and public workplan;
- Other fishery improvement activities, including stakeholder participation and capacity building, important to the advancement of marine conservation, and consistent with overall SFF guidelines; and
- Full assessments and re-assessments of strategic importance, on a limited basis

#### *Eligible Organizations*

- Fishing, fish-worker, or seafood organizations;
- Fishery management agencies
- Academic or research organizations;
- Nonprofit organizations working in partnership with fisheries or agencies; and
- Other organizations, on a case-by-case basis.

#### *Match Requirement*

- Match funding of at least one-to one is required for all projects.
- A two-to-one match is required for projects pertaining to a fishery similar in species, gear-type, and other ways to a fishery that already has been certified by the MSC or Fair Trade.
- Fair Trade premiums qualify as a match when applied to environmental improvements that help advance the fishery toward performance consistent with MSC standards.

- For small scale or especially financially challenged fisheries, RLF will consider in-kind effort as part of the required match on a case-by-case basis. All other applicants are expected to provide a cash match.

***Note: Funding from RLF/SFF funders (The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation) may not be considered part of the applicant's match for the project.***

## **II. SFF Grantmaking Strategy**

RLF's current priorities are to provide support to pre-assessments and the design and initiation of FIPs worldwide, with an emphasis on projects in Mexico, Peru, Chile, Indonesia, and Japan. RLF will consider strategically important full assessments, re-assessments, stakeholder participation projects, and other capacity building activities on a limited basis. Proposed projects should address the following criteria:

### *Certifiable*

Fisheries that are the focus of a project should have a reasonable chance of:

- Establishing a healthy fish population;
- Minimizing fishing impacts on the surrounding ecosystem; and
- Developing and implementing an effective fishery management system.

### *Leverage*

A proposed project should increase the market impact of fisheries certified as sustainable by MSC or Fair Trade. Such fisheries, which may be small or large-scale and in developed or developing countries, include those that exhibit any combination of the following qualities:

- Supply high-demand seafoods and are effectively traded in a transparent marketplace;
- Are seafood sources for major brands sold by major retailers and food-service businesses;
- Are sources for seafood in priority markets (North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand) and expansion markets (Japan, Russia, South America);
- Generate momentum toward certification by other similar fisheries, either through competitive pressure or by demonstrating the application of MSC or Fair Trade standards to a type of fishery;
- Supply regionally significant seafoods; and/or
- Are fisheries whose certification would generate confidence in fishery improvement and certification processes among key stakeholders, such as government agencies.

### *Viable Applicant*

An applicant for SFF funding should be able to demonstrate:

- The capacity to carry out the project, including the capacity to convene stakeholders, interact with governments, and manage project finances. (We strongly encourage applicants to familiarize themselves with the assessment process and its requirements for a fishery seeking certification. Reviewing past assessment reports posted on the MSC website ([www.msc.org](http://www.msc.org)) is one way of doing so.);
- A clear commitment to fishery sustainability and/or improvement; and
- Status as a philanthropic partner with RLF by ensuring that and documenting how RLF funds were used for charitable purposes.

### *Catalytic Investment*

SFF funding must serve to stimulate engagement with MSC or Fair Trade that might not otherwise occur.

## **III. Application Process**

This program awards grants on a quarterly basis. In order to apply for a grant, applicants must first submit a brief letter of inquiry (LOI) via RLF's online portal: [https://www.grantrequest.com/SID\\_2143/?SA=SNA&FID=35029](https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_2143/?SA=SNA&FID=35029). The LOI guidelines are provided below in section IV. Once submitted, the LOI will be reviewed by RLF staff, who may then invite a full proposal from eligible applicants.

## **IV. LOI Guidelines**

Please use the following guidelines when developing the LOI. The LOI should not exceed two pages in length.

### *Organization Description*

Please describe:

- Type of organization making the request;
- Organization's capacity to carry out the project; and
- How the organization has demonstrated its commitment to the fishery sustainability improvement

### *Project Description*

Please describe:

- Type of fishery project for which funding is requested. Please provide information regarding a fishery's supply chain, including the types of markets and buyers for which the fishery supplies the seafood product (e.g., domestic, international, both); and how the target markets are tracked;
- Please also provide information regarding the type of improvement or certification sought (MSC, Fair Trade, other).
- Economic need for assistance. If an applicant is invited to submit a proposal, RLF will request and evaluate the applicant's financial statements to: (1) determine

the financial health and solvency of the organization; and (2) determine whether an applicant has the capacity to fund the project without RLF support.

- Geographic area where the project will take place
- Time period for which funding is requested
- Estimated start date and end date of the project
- Project support from other groups or organizations
- The sources and amounts of match funding for the project. Match funding can be leveraged from industry, philanthropic, or government sources, or from Fair Trade premiums.

For assessment and fishery improvement projects, please address the following points:

- What general evidence is there that the fishery can meet the sustainability criteria and standards of MSC or Fair Trade?
- What type of leverage will sustainability assessment and improvement of the fishery provide?
- How will SFF funding stimulate engagement in sustainability assessment and improvements that might not otherwise occur?
- How will the applicant track the progress of the project over the grant period?
- For all FIP and pre-assessment projects, applicants are encouraged to use the MSC benchmarking tool (BMT) and include results in grant report(s) to RLF. For more information about the BMT Tool, please visit:  
[https://www.msc.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/for-business/fishery-improvement-tools/benchmarking-and-tracking-tool--guidance-document.pdf?sfvrsn=840c1bb\\_20](https://www.msc.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/for-business/fishery-improvement-tools/benchmarking-and-tracking-tool--guidance-document.pdf?sfvrsn=840c1bb_20)
- For all projects, grantees are expected to share assessment reports or updates on the improvement process in grant report(s) to RLF.

Additional requirements for FIPs:

- For FIP design and initiation projects, RLF encourages applicants to review the information provided on the MSC website regarding the definition of a credible FIP. The information can be found at: <https://www.msc.org/about-us/credibility/all-fisheries/tools-for-fisheries-improving-towards-msc-certification/fips>
- Applicants seeking support for design of FIPs must disclose in their LOI other similar FIPs known to be underway for the same fishery.
- Applicants are expected to share FIP information on the Fishery Improvement Project tracking website at [www.fisheryprogress.org](http://www.fisheryprogress.org).
- Applicants seeking support for Fair Trade certification are expected to create a publicly available FIP workplan as a grant deliverable and post to [www.fisheryprogress.org](http://www.fisheryprogress.org)
- Names of companies who will be engaged or stand to benefit from the FIP.

*Project Budget*

In a spreadsheet table format, please show:

- Total project costs;
- Amount requested from SFF (maximum allowable overhead rate is 15%); and
- In-kind contributions and other sources of match funding. Please note whether match funding is secured or pending.

Please submit all LOIs via RLF's online portal:

[https://www.grantrequest.com/SID\\_2143/?SA=SNA&FID=35029](https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_2143/?SA=SNA&FID=35029) s