



## New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116

Eric Reid, *Chair* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

### COUNCIL SOLICITING CONTRACT WORK

#### Executive Search Services

February 8, 2023

#### Project Description

The New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC, Council) requires the services of an independent contractor to assist the Council with the hiring of a permanent, full-time executive director.

Working with the Council's current executive director and Executive Committee, the contractor will:

- Clarify with the Executive Committee the qualifications and experience desired for the executive director role, incorporating current and future needs of the organization and the fisheries it serves;
- In coordination with the Council's public affairs officer (PAO), undertake an outreach effort to identify and encourage qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply for the position;
- Provide coaching and guidance to the Executive Committee and Council members on essential search protocols, including contact with candidates during the outreach and the development of effective interview questions;
- Execute a rigorous evaluation and screening process following the Council's objective desired qualifications and evaluate qualified candidates on their individual merit by:
  - Conducting all background and reference checks for all qualified candidates,
  - Providing the Executive Committee with an initial pool of recommended candidates and a detailed objective evaluation assessment of each, and
  - Providing the Council with feedback on why other candidates were not recommended to the Council; and
- As requested, support the Executive Committee's development of the list of finalist candidates.

This is a short-term, temporary contractor role, commencing on or about March 1, 2023, and ending in June 2023. The Council's goal is to make a hiring decision by early June 2023. **Note: The scheduling and execution of in-person meetings will be contingent on the CDC COVID-19 level of community transmission assessment. This may cause delays in the execution of this work or a transition to remote meetings.** Interested firms should include a proposed work plan, number of Executive Committee meetings required, and a draft timeline.

#### Council Background

The New England Fishery Management Council, one of eight regional councils established by federal legislation in 1976, is charged with conserving and managing fishery resources from three to 200 miles off the coasts of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and



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Connecticut. The management authority of the Council extends to the Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank, and southern New England, and overlaps with the Mid-Atlantic Council for some species in that region. Major ports include Portland, ME, Gloucester and New Bedford, MA, and Point Judith, RI. The Council is an instrumentality of the federal government; employees are not federal employees.

The Council's 18 voting members include:

- The regional administrator of the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region (or a designee);
- The five principal state officials with marine fishery management responsibility (or a designee) for Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut; and
- Twelve members nominated by the governors of the New England coastal states and appointed by the Secretary of Commerce.

In addition, four non-voting members represent the United States Coast Guard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of State, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

The Council is supported in its work by a staff of twenty fishery management professionals, including the executive director, deputy director, a public affairs officer, four administrative and financial professionals, and thirteen fishery management analysts/specialists overseeing ten fishery management plans. The Council has an annual operating budget of approximately \$4.5 million and is entirely funded through a 5-year cooperative agreement with the Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service. Additional information about the Council may be found on the Council's website: [NEFMC - Conserving and managing New England's fishery resources](#).

### **Project Background**

The Council's current executive director is retiring after 25 years with the Council, ten of which were in the executive director position. The Council is in a strong financial position and has a diverse and experienced professional staff. The current Council has limited experience hiring for the executive director position, hence the desire to engage a highly qualified executive search firm.

### **Authority**

The Council's five-member Executive Committee has responsibility for overseeing the administration of the Council's employment practices. The full Council has approved the Executive Committee to undertake the executive search. The chair, as delegated by the Council, functions as the chief executive officer with general charge and supervision over and responsibility for the business affairs of the Council. In the name of the Council, the chair may enter and execute contracts and other instruments in the regular course of business. The chair may delegate these matters to the executive director at his discretion. The executive director serves at the pleasure of the Council.

The Executive Committee, as it has done in past executive director searches, intends to recommend finalist candidates to the full Council, which will vote on the selection of a new executive director



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during a closed session of the full Council. The details of this process will be explained to the successful respondent.

### **Project Objectives**

The objective of this effort is to undertake a thoughtful, objective, and trusted executive search process and to:

- Ensure the development of and support for an objective set of qualification and skills required of an executive director for the current and future needs of the Council, fisheries served, and Council staff;
- Ensure that the identification of, outreach to, and assessment of candidates incorporates the Council's commitment of diversity and inclusion and is based upon demonstrated skills;
- Execute a rigorous evaluation and screening process following the Council's objective qualifications and evaluate qualified candidates on their individual merit;
- Identify and gain support and consensus among Executive Committee members at key search decision points regarding candidate skills, trade-offs, and essential qualifications; and
- Communicate progress and next steps as appropriate to the full Council through the Executive Committee and executive director while still retaining the Executive Committee leadership of the search process in a manner that promotes trust and transparency.

### **Initial Statement of Work**

The following list illustrates the activities expected from the contractor. This list is not all-inclusive. A detailed work statement and list of deliverables will be negotiated.

1. Meet with selected individuals to understand the role of the Council, its organization, and culture.
2. Meet with the Executive Committee and develop an overall work plan and timeline for the search and selection process. The timeline should align with the Council's goal to make a final hiring decision by early June 2023.
3. Provide feedback on the Council's vacancy announcement for this position.
4. Develop a written outreach program for review by the Executive Committee. Incorporate committee feedback.
5. Provide coaching and guidance to the Executive Committee and Council members on the overall search process and essential search protocols, including contact with candidates during the outreach, evaluation, and selection phases of the search process. Assist the Executive Committee and Council members as requested with the development of interview questions. Provide suggestions on wording and subject matter.
6. Execute the outreach effort and solicit candidates. This effort will be coordinated with the Council's PAO. Receive all applicant documents.



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7. Evaluate applicants based upon materials submitted and position requirements. Contact references and assess experience and qualifications. For qualified candidates, conduct an initial qualitative interview as necessary to select candidates for the interview process with the Executive Committee.
8. Develop a list of recommended candidates for interviews with the Executive Committee and present an objective evaluation assessment of each. This assessment should be detailed and in a format that allows for a comparison across all candidates. The format for this report will be approved by the Executive Committee in advance. Provide the Council with feedback on why other applicants were not recommended to the Council.
9. If requested by the Executive Committee, facilitate development of the final list of candidates to be interviewed by the full Council in a closed session. If requested, update the finalist candidate assessments based upon feedback from the Executive Committee.
10. Communicate with recommended candidates. Communications with candidates not selected will be as directed by the Executive Committee. And
11. Provide routine progress reports (every two weeks) to the executive director outlining the number and strength of applications, any issues encountered, required decisions and time frames, and next steps.

The Council will be responsible for the organization and logistics of meetings between the executive search firm, candidates, and the Executive Committee and the full Council. Where possible, these meetings will be in-person, but some may be conducted via webinar when warranted. The Council will contract directly with the venues for all meetings associated with this effort. Executive director candidate travel will be coordinated and paid for directly by the Council following its routine travel authorization process.

### **Desired Experience and Demonstrated Skills**

The successful contractor should have:

1. Demonstrated experience successfully conducting executive searches for not-for-profit or governmental organizations of similar size (budget and staffing), and governance;
2. Experience with conservation, natural resources, or governmental organizations;
3. Demonstrated strong writing and presentation skills;
4. Demonstrated ability to summarize candidate skills, experience, strengths, and areas for development in clear, easily read documents and through concise verbal presentations;
5. Demonstrated credentials in human resources management, interviewing skills, and employment law;
6. Demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion in outreach and assessment efforts;
7. Strong meeting and facilitation skills for groups of 20-30 individuals, including the ability to facilitate virtual or hybrid meetings if necessary; and
8. No conflict of interest, defined as any financial or non-financial interest that conflicts with the actions or judgments of an individual because it could:
  - a. Impair the individual's objectivity,
  - b. Create an unfair competitive advantage for any person or organization, or



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- c. Create the appearance of either item listed above.

### Application Submission Contact

Interested professionals and organizations are encouraged to submit a letter of interest, a current resume or CV, case studies of similar work completed for other organizations, client references, references for at least three placed individuals, and a proposed budget (or fee structure) that is aligned with or reflects the 11 tasks outlined in the Statement of Work above, including expected expenses. Respondents should describe the approach that would be used to meet the requirements of this project, including how candidates will be evaluated, and outline deliverables. Respondents should explain how they evaluate their own successes. For example, is it based on number of applications received, time to fill the position, time a successful candidate spends in a position, or some other factor? Given the nature of executive search services, respondents will also be expected to provide information on the following:

- Fee structure and timing;
- Search service guarantee terms and duration;
- Off-limits terms (non-solicitation of Council employees for other positions);
- Commitment to not present candidates to multiple clients; and
- Confidentiality and exclusivity

Letters of interest and supporting materials should be received by **March 1, 2023**, and addressed to: Executive Director Thomas Nies, NEFMC, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950. Email submissions should be sent to [tnies@nefmc.org](mailto:tnies@nefmc.org). Questions concerning technical aspects of this proposal should be directed to Mr. Nies. Questions concerning the contracting process or Department of Commerce - NOAA grant regulations should be directed to the Council's Administrative Officer Margaret Bernier at [mbernier@nefmc.org](mailto:mbernier@nefmc.org).

This work will be funded under New England Fishery Management Council Award #FNA20NMF4410001. Compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (P.L. 109-479 as amended) and the Council's standard contract terms and conditions will be required. A copy of these terms and conditions is available on request.

The NEFMC takes affirmative action toward ensuring equal opportunities; the Council encourages women-owned businesses, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities to submit letters of interest and other requested materials for consideration under this announcement.

### Disclaimer

1. All costs associated with the preparation and presentation of the proposal will be borne by consultants submitting letters of interest.
2. Necessary office space and equipment will be provided by the contractor; approved travel



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expenses will be reimbursed by the Council.

3. Materials submitted will not be returned.
4. Respondents must disclose any relevant conflicts of interest and will be expected to comply with all federal grant contracting requirements.
5. The Council reserves the right to: accept or reject any or all letters of interest received; negotiate with all qualified potential candidates; cancel or modify the RFP in part or its entirety; and/or change the application guidelines when it is in its best interests.