

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES FUND

Letter of Inquiry

Overview

The Sustainable Fisheries Fund (SFF), a program of the Resources Legacy Fund (RLF), is designed to globally promote ecologically and economically sustainable fisheries by supporting the participation of such fisheries and conservation organizations in the certification program of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). The program is focused on providing grants to **eligible organizations** including:

- Fishing, fish-worker, or seafood organizations;
- Fishery management agencies and university, academic, or research organizations;
- Nonprofit organizations; and
- Other relevant types of organizations, on a case-by-case basis.

SFF grants help defray the costs of four classes of activities:

- Pre-assessments of fisheries that are economically challenged or strategically important to further marine conservation;
- Full assessments of fisheries that are economically challenged or strategically important to further marine conservation;
- Stakeholder participation in fishery assessments; and
- Strategic planning of fisheries assessments and certifications in a specific geographic area, addressing deficiencies identified through pre-assessments or full assessments, and other activities related to capacity building.

In general, **a one-to-one match in funding from other sources is required**. Where funding is being sought for the pre-assessment or assessment of a fishery similar in species, gear-type, and other ways to a fishery that already has been certified, **a two-to-one match will be required**.

Letter of Inquiry Guidelines

Letters of inquiry (**no more than three pages**) may be submitted electronically at any time to sff@resourceslegacyfund.org. Please include the following information:

Description of Requesting Organization

- What type of organization is making the request?
- What is the capacity of the organization to carry out the project?
- How has the organization demonstrated its commitment to the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) process?
- How will the organization fulfill a role as a philanthropic partner to SFF?

Background on Proposed Project

All letters of inquiry should provide general background information on the project. In the case of pre-assessment or assessment projects, letters of inquiry should address several key questions:

- What general evidence is there that the fishery can meet the MSC's principles and criteria?
 - Applicants should carefully review the MSC's principles and criteria before responding to this question. Applicants may also wish to review an assessment and/or scoring guidelines for a similar fishery posted on the MSC web site (www.msc.org) in order to better understand the certification process.
 - What type of leverage will certification of the fishery provide? RLF is particularly interested in fisheries that supply markets in North America and Western Europe.
 - Does any controversy surround the fishery and, if so, how is that controversy managed?

Request for Funding

- Is the funding request for:
 - A pre-assessment of a fishery that is economically challenged or strategically important to further marine conservation?
 - A full assessment of a fishery that is economically challenged or strategically important to further marine conservation?
 - Stakeholder participation in a fishery assessment?
 - Strategic planning of fisheries assessments and certifications in a specific geographic area?
 - Addressing deficiencies identified through pre-assessments or full assessments, or other activities related to capacity building?
- How will SFF funding stimulate engagement with the MSC process that might not otherwise occur?

Potential Funding Partners

- With what other organizations is the requesting organization partnering for funding or for other support of the project?

Potential Support

- How has the organization generated broad-based involvement in the past?

Detailed Project Budget

- What are the total funding needs and requested funding needs for the project, by general category?
- If the applicant is seeking funds for pre-assessment or assessment, has it obtained bids from MSC-accredited certifiers?
- If the applicant is seeking funds for pre-assessment or assessment, what is the economic need for assistance?
- What in-kind contributions or sources of matching funds has the applicant secured?

SFF Grantmaking Strategy

In evaluating letters of inquiry and proposals, RLF will consider a project's fit with SFF's grantmaking strategy. A principal objective of this strategy is to increase the impact of MSC-certified fisheries on major seafood markets. Proposed projects should meet the following criteria:

Certiability

Fisheries that are the focus of a project should have a reasonable chance of meeting MSC principles and criteria, including:

- The population of fish is healthy;
- The impact of fishing on the ecosystem is sustainable; and
- An effective fishery management system is in place.

Leverage

A proposed project should generate leverage in promoting sustainable fisheries, particularly by increasing the market impact of MSC-certified fisheries. Such fisheries, which may be small- or large-scale and in developed or developing countries, include those that exhibit one or more of the following qualities:

- Fisheries that supply high-demand seafoods, come from multiple sources, and are effectively traded in a transparent marketplace (e.g., larger tuna, whitefish, salmon, or shrimp fisheries).
- Fisheries that are sources for seafood for major brands sold by major retailers and food-service businesses (e.g., tuna and whitefish).
- Fisheries that are sources for seafood in priority markets, including North America, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.
- Fisheries that generate momentum toward certification by other similar fisheries, either through competitive pressure or by demonstrating the application of the MSC's standards to a type of fishery.
- Fisheries that supply regionally significant seafoods.
- Fisheries whose certification would generate confidence in the MSC process 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: In the case of fishery certifications, this includes 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 information that must be provided by a fishery seeking certification. Reviewing past assessment reports posted on the MSC website (www.msc.org) is one way of doing so.
- A clear commitment to the MSC process.
- Status as a philanthropic partner with SFF. Regardless of the type of organization receiving a grant from SFF, the funds must be used for charitable purposes, and the SFF allows a maximum overhead rate of 10 percent. It should be noted that the MSC does not allow environmental organizations to act alone as a client for certification, but as a partner with a fishery client or agency.

Catalytic Investment

SFF funding must serve to stimulate engagement with the MSC certification process that might not otherwise occur.

Other Factors

Depending upon the type of project, the following factors also will be taken into account:

- Applicants seeking funds for pre-assessment or assessment should have obtained bids from MSC-accredited certifiers.
- Applicants seeking funds for pre-assessment or assessment should demonstrate a clear economic need for assistance.

Preference will be given to applicants who:

- Identify in-kind contributions or sources of matching funds.
- Demonstrate partnership with other organizations or agencies.
- Demonstrate a capacity to generate broad-based involvement.