



Fee Assessment for Submarine Cables Special Use Permit

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Implementation Period

January 1, 2025 – June 1, 2025

Projects should span no more than five months from the date of the issuance of the contract.

Application Package Due

November 27, 2024

11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time

BACKGROUND

[National Marine Sanctuary Foundation](#), in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of National Marine Sanctuaries may assess certain fees as part of the issuance of special use permits (SUPs) authorized pursuant to the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA). The NMSA allows ONMS to assess three types of fees for SUPs: administrative fees, implementation and monitoring fees, and fair market value (FMV) for the access and use of sanctuary resources.

ONMS uses an SUP for the ongoing placement of submarine cables within or on the submerged lands of a national marine sanctuary. In 2002, NOAA published a notice in the Federal Register (FRN) and issued a report specific to the assessment of FMV for submarine telecommunication cables permits. The report established that the FMV for the submarine telecommunication cable SUP should equate to a range of \$40K-\$100K per linear mile, based on a comparable transactions methodology. Annual adjustments to the FMV for submarine telecommunication cables are based on the average increase in the Consumer Price Index - All Urban All City Average. In the FRN, ONMS committed to periodically reviewing and updating the FMV rates based on current comparable transactions. The work described in this statement of work is intended to fulfill this commitment.



With the growth of the National Marine Sanctuary System through the designation of new national marine sanctuaries and increase in areas with potential overlap with the placement of submarine cables, ONMS needs an evaluation of the appropriate FMV for the access and use of sanctuary resources for SUPs that allow the placement of submarine cables in a national marine sanctuary. The evaluation should consider whether comparable transactions are still the most appropriate method to establish FMV. The evaluation should include a variety of submarine cables, including those for telecommunication, energy transmission, and other types of utilities more broadly. The evaluation should not only consider length of cables, but also the width of the area used in the case of multiple submarine cables transiting a sanctuary. The methods to assess and values of the fees shall be presented in a peer-reviewed report to ONMS. ONMS would publish updated information and identification of a final approach in a notice in the Federal Register. The updated methodology and values of assessed SUP fees would facilitate ONMS consideration of applications for SUPs for submarine cables and assessment of appropriate FMV rates to permittees in all national marine sanctuaries across the Sanctuary System including newly designated sites.

The updated methodology and values of assessed SUP fees would facilitate ONMS consideration of permit applications for SUPs for submarine cables and assessment of appropriate FMV rates to permittees. There is value in both protecting sanctuary resources and supporting the telecommunications infrastructure, which are both important in a public policy context. It would benefit the community to complete this updated evaluation so the most appropriate FMV fees for the access and use of sanctuary resources can be applied and it will also aid in processing the permit applications more efficiently.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project involves the development of a peer-reviewed report that includes an updated FMV assessment methodology and values for FMV fees for the access and use of a national marine sanctuary for the placement of submarine cables within or on the submerged lands of a sanctuary.

PROJECT PROCESS

The contractor will coordinate work with staff in the Protected Areas Policy Division and other divisions, regions, or sanctuaries as appropriate. The contractor will review relevant literature and produce a report that provides an analysis of applicable socioeconomic valuation methodologies and comparable rates for various submarine cable scenarios and provides the scientific basis and rationale for the methods and rates. The contractor will also provide recommendations on fee assessment for FMV in particular, but also consider the other types of SUP fees for administrative and permit implementation and monitoring, and annual adjustments to FMV. Literature would include, but is not limited to, those produced by ONMS in developing the SUP categories and establishing fees, ONMS permit records, scientific literature, and other similar types of permits or environmental review documentation issued by Federal, state or local authorities. The report including the proposed methods, rationale and proposed FMV fees will be peer reviewed.



PROJECT MILESTONES

- Determine types of submarine cables scenarios within the scope of this project
- Determine what literature needs to be considered and complete review of all relevant literature and conduct interviews with agency experts
- Complete report
- Agency and peer-review of report
- Address all comments from review of report
- Complete final report

The timeline of project activities should be clearly addressed in the applicant's proposal. Project proposals that do not address whether work can be completed within the noted timeline will not be rated as highly in the review process. Project duration should be no more than 5 months from the date of the issuance of the contract.

PHASE DETAILS

- Phase 1: Initialize scope of the scenarios (2 Weeks)
- Phase 2: Conduct literature review and expert interviews, and finalize scenarios (1 ½ Months)
- Phase 3: Draft report (1 ½ Months)
- Phase 4: Agency and peer-review of report (1 Month)
- Phase 5: Finalize report (2 Weeks)

ELIGIBILITY

Successful applicant must possess:

- In-depth knowledge about submarine cables, especially fiber optic cables and power cables from offshore wind installations.
- Experience with economic impact modeling.
- Experience collecting data and identifying policy options.
- Understanding of the value of ecosystem services provided by different substrate types both outside and within sanctuaries.
- Strong communication, technical writing, computer, and organization skills.

HOW TO APPLY

Application packages should be submitted by 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on November 27, 2024. Please submit your application package to the Foundation through C-STAAR – the Foundation's Collaborative System for Tracking Activities, Awards, and Reporting - using the following link: <https://marinesanctuary.smartsimple.com/> .

Please direct all questions regarding this RFP to support@marinesanctuary.org with the email subject line: RFP QUESTION Fee Assessment for Submarine Cables Special Use Permit: [Name of Organization].

Application packages should include:

- Completed Proposal
- Budget
- Proof of Past Performance

Determinations will be made by December 7, 2024, and applicants notified shortly thereafter.

Budget Requirements

The budget shall not exceed \$200,000.

REVIEW PROCESS

Evaluation Criteria	Sub-Questions	Score	Scoring for this criterion will be assessed on how well proposals:
Technical Skills and Project Feasibility	<p>Does the proposal clearly identify reasonable goals and objectives?</p> <p>Is the proposal feasible in the performance timeframe period?</p> <p>Is a descriptive timeline included?</p> <p>Do the applicant and any project partners have the ability and expertise (or the potential) to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work?</p>	50	<p>Demonstrate a thorough level of planning that will allow the applicant to begin the project promptly and complete the project within the period of the performance timeline. Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do milestones identified in the project timeline align with project goals and objectives? • Are project partners and roles clearly identified? • Do activities take place during the implementation period?
Past Performance	<p>How well did the contractor comply with the contract's requirements? How satisfied was the customer with the contractor's work? Did the quality of the product or service meet the customer's standards?</p>	30	<p>Demonstrate satisfaction from other customers that past performance was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed on time and within budgetary requirements. • Complied with contractual obligations. • Satisfactorily met the customer's standards.
Project Costs	<p>Is the budget realistic? Does the budget have a meaningful use of funding? Does the budget description sufficiently explain how each item in the budget table supports project activities?</p>	20	<p>Provide a detailed list of specific items, tools, materials, etc., and associated costs for each expense category. Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are explanations provided for how each item in the budget table supports project activities? • Are budgeted items prioritized that directly support projects and/or workforce development and capacity-building opportunities (program staff salary, fringe,



			and indirect budget requests are relatively small fractions of the total budget)?
Total Points	100		

ABOUT US

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation was founded in 2000 by America’s most influential ocean conservation leaders and works with communities and NOAA to conserve and expand these special places for a healthy ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes. Sanctuaries and monuments are our essential network of protected waters, owned by every American and championed by us. Connected by currents, they sustain miraculous species, coastal communities, and our shared heritage. The Foundation is a leading voice for U.S.-protected waters, and our work extends from the ocean floor to the classroom to Capitol Hill. The Foundation supports a growing portfolio of Community Stewardship, Outreach, and Education programs aimed at providing students, educators, and lifelong learners with opportunities to explore and discover connections to the natural world, no matter where they live.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

This is a Request for Proposals (RFP) only. Issuance of this RFP does not in any way obligate the Foundation to make an award or pay for costs incurred by potential offerors in the preparation and submission of an offer. In addition:

- (a) The Foundation may cancel RFP and not award;
- (b) The Foundation may reject any or all responses received;
- (c) Issuance of RFP does not constitute award commitment by The Foundation;
- (d) The Foundation reserves the right to disqualify any offer based on offeror failure to follow RFP instructions;
- (e) The Foundation will not compensate offerors for a response to RFP;
- (f) The Foundation reserves the right to issue an award based on an initial evaluation of offers without further discussion;
- (g) The Foundation may negotiate with short-listed offerors for their best and final offer;
- (h) The Foundation reserves the right to order additional quantities or units with the selected offer or;
- (i) The Foundation may reissue the solicitation or issue formal amendments revising the original RFP specifications and evaluation criteria before or after receipt of proposals;
- (j) The Foundation may modify the specifications without issuing a formal notice to all offerors when the revisions are immaterial to the scope of the RFP;
- (k) The Foundation may choose to award only part of the activities in the RFP or issue multiple awards based on multiple RFP activities; and



(l) The Foundation reserves the right to waive minor proposal deficiencies that can be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition.