

Regional Policy and Coordination Support Specialist

Consultant services for in-region policy and coordination support for activities in Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific Region

Purpose

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is requesting proposals for consultant services for a Regional Policy and Coordination Support Specialist to provide in-region support for NOAA's Partnership for Natural Resource Management activities in Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region, with a focus on the DOS Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDMA) and Bi-lateral Philippines Program.

Overview

Project Background

The Partnership for Natural Resource Management is a five-year (2021–2026) interagency agreement between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with the support of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and the Department of State. It is being implemented by NOAA's Marine Protected Area Center and Coral Reef Conservation Program.

The Indo-Pacific region is one of the most biodiverse on Earth, and its fisheries are critical to global food security. Climate change, unsustainable fishing, and IUU fishing practices are devastating the fisheries and marine resources that sustain communities across the region. Under a Participating Agency Program Agreement (PAPA) between NOAA and the Department of State's Regional Environment Office (DOS REO), NOAA works with DOS and partner governments in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific to address threats to coastal and marine biodiversity, including through capacity building, technical assistance, information exchanges, peer-to-peer engagement, and government-to-government engagement.

The objectives of this project are to: (1) Increase the capacities of individuals and institutions, bilaterally and regionally, to effectively and sustainably implement natural resource management and fisheries regulations and agreements; (2) Increase information sharing and coordination among agencies and institutions within and between target countries; (3) Increase biodiversity conservation by sustainably managing economically and ecologically important species or areas within coastal and marine environments. This includes building capacity to enforce natural resource and fisheries regulations.

Period of Performance

The contractual arrangement should be valid from May 1, 2026 – September 30, 2026. The Consultant will travel within Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region as required.

Reports and other outputs/deliverables shall be submitted as indicated in the scope of work.

Scope of Work

Desired Outcomes

The primary responsibilities are in two major areas of work: (a) provide regional specific guidance for a more contextualized, nuanced and need-based approach to NOAA's technical assistance, and (b) coordination and communication with DOS REO, DOS Philippines, and regional government and non-government entities in support of NOAA capacity building and technical assistance efforts. In addition, the contractor will assist in tracking and reporting NOAA activities and assisting with material development.

Policy Advice

In coordination with DOS/REO and DOS/Philippines, the contractor will serve as a Regional Coordinator for NOAA partnerships with ASEAN countries to coordinate in-region activities and insure their effectiveness. This includes distilling partner training and technical assistance needs and interests to allow NOAA to better tailor its offerings. The Regional Coordinator will work with regional partners such the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) Training Department, FishRight, other relevant inter-governmental organizations IGOs (e.g., FAO), relevant partner national government agencies, NGOs to ensure our efforts are aligned. The contractor will provide regular communication to the NOAA team of relevant developments and issues within the country. Duties include:

- Providing inputs to specific plans and activities of NOAA partnerships
- Ensuring perspectives, including specific context and needs of DOS REO and DOS Philippines, are considered in the planning and implementation towards self-sufficiency
- Customizing any technical assistance and capacity-building proposals and designs, as may be needed, based on the priorities and circumstances of implementing partners especially SEAFDEC member nations, BFAR and the Coral Triangle Initiative, and integrated with current and planned directions of government partners

Coordination

The contractor will serve as a coordinator for NOAA partnerships in Southeast Asia, including coordinating with NOAA and DOS REO and DOS Philippines partners, relevant

IGOs, NGOs, and implementing partners. The contractor will provide regular communication to the NOAA team of relevant developments and issues within the country. Duties include:

- Acting as local coordinator for NOAA's partnerships with DOS REO
- Coordinating with the coordinators who lead this partnership at NOAA Fisheries, NOAA Office of Marine Sanctuaries, or other NOAA offices to ensure alignment and integration in strengthening the governance and resilience of coastal ecosystems and fisheries
- Liaising with partner ministries and attending in-person meetings with partner governments on a frequent basis to advance NOAA's projects under our DOS REO and DOS Philippines interagency agreements
- Maintaining regular access, communication, and coordination with local officials working with the NOAA/DOS REO and DOS Philippines partnerships
- Coordinating with implementing partners (i.e., FishRight, SEAFDEC, etc.) to ensure alignment and integration of planning, logistical arrangements of in-country activities to optimize in-country technical visits of NOAA
- Liaising with partner ministries and embassies within the region to coordinate Port State Measures Agreement and other counter illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU) learning exchanges
- Coordinating with the Embassy to submit any Leahy vetting needs
- Providing on-the-ground logistical support for NOAA offices and NOAA event participants as necessary, related to training workshops, exchanges, and other capacity building and technical assistance efforts (i.e., coordinating with partner governments to arrange venue locations/contracts, workshop transportation needs (e.g., classroom to port), translation/interpretation needs, etc.)
- Providing in-region support for meetings, information exchanges, and projects conducted under the U.S. Maritime Security and Fisheries Enforcement Act to combat IUU fishing and associated crimes

Tracking & Reporting

The contractor will assist tracking of country-specific set of goals, objectives, and deliverables, as directed by NOAA staff, including:

- Provide tracking of progress of deliverables during year
- Track and report goals and targets identified required by DOS and NOAA for activities
- Track & report targets advanced at each NOAA activity

Material Development

The contractor will support NOAA staff by researching, developing, and/or translating materials to assist in meeting work plan deliverables. Assistance will include:

- Adapting materials for applicability and use within the region
- Research information needed to develop and adapt materials
- Summarize strategic organizational documents
- Coordinate with local training centers and programs to ensure NOAA training materials meet local needs

Key Skills/experience/attributes:

Educational Background and Certifications:

- Minimum Bachelor's degree, or equivalent, in marine and fisheries, social and environmental sciences economics, management, public administration or relevant fields is required
- Advanced University degree in ocean-related sciences, policy, or management preferred.

Expertise in Marine Management:

- Working familiarity with the Southeast Asian marine environment and management, including marine ecosystems, fisheries, and their governance.
- Familiarity with regional priorities and initiatives, including Blue Economy, Fisheries Management, Port State Measures Agreement and IUU fishing
- Familiarity and experience with the organizational structure, operations, and portfolio of the principal agencies involved: NOAA, DOS REO, DOS-Philippines, and FishRight in the Philippines

Capacity Building and Facilitation:

- Demonstrable experience in policy analysis, capacity building efforts, and trainings in Southeast Asia.
- Expertise in developing training curricula focused on participatory learning, including agendas, job aids, presentations, case studies, interactive activities and exercises, and reference materials.

Logistical and Operational Expertise:

- Coordinated logistics for international meetings, workshops, and study tours, including travel, field visits, and interpretation services.
- Experience providing on-the-ground logistical support for NOAA or similar USG activities in Southeast Asia.



Regional Knowledge and Experience:

- Working familiarity with policies, projects, and marine management practices across Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific.
- Ability to coordinate with multiple stakeholders, including ASEAN governments, NGOs, IGOs, and international organizations.
- Established professional networks with relevant regional government and non-government partners.

Writing and Reporting Skills:

- Proven experience in curriculum development, report writing, and documentation.
- Ability to produce written reports, briefing memos, and activity summaries following USG reporting formats.

Professional Skills and Requirements:

- Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) required.
- Ability to work independently to meet objectives and timelines.
- Written and oral fluency in English; proficiency in a Southeast Asian language is an asset.
- Valid passport and availability for regular travel within Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific.

Place of Performance

Preference for the official to be stationed in Philippines or Bangkok to more effectively coordinate with DOS, and related FishRight programs. Preference may be given toward U.S. citizens based in Bangkok/Philippines over non-U.S. citizen contractors in those locations.

HOW TO APPLY

Application packages should be submitted by 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on May 18, 2026. 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/>.

The C-STAAR platform will ask individual questions related to your project, answered through separate form fields, and will have some questions that allow for uploading additional materials or providing links to those materials. If your proposal is selected for funding, your agreement will be managed through the C-STAAR platform.

Please direct all questions regarding the submission of applications to the C-STAAR platform to support@marinesanctuary.org with the email subject line: RFP QUESTION Regional Policy and Coordination Support Specialist: [Name].

Application packages should include:

- An updated resume
- Short proposal for how the individual/organization would complete the activities outlined in this RFP and statement of work on the schedule provided; and,
- Detailed budget proposal for a time and materials agreement.
- All required fields of the application in C-STAAR must be completed before submission. Applications can be saved as a draft to return to and submit when completed. Any additional contributors to work on the proposal per organization must be invited and accepted into C-STAAR. Multiple users cannot work on the proposal simultaneously.
- Determinations will be made by May 22, 2026, and applicants notified shortly thereafter.

Agreement Ceiling: \$41,250

Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on the submitted application package materials

Budget & Payment Terms

Consultant will be paid based on hours billed and a negotiated hourly rate. The Consultant must bill on a monthly basis to the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. Travel will be reimbursed separately per the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation's travel policy. For all international travel, the Consultant must use the Foundation's travel agent. The Consultant is responsible for acquiring the necessary travel visas.

Note: Travel insurance will be covered by the Consultant.

Prior to undertaking any activity aligned with this agreement's scope of work, the consultant should confirm receipt of written instruction on the requested activity, total billable hours available, and correct accounting code from their NOAA coordinator. Consultant invoices should include the hours billed per activity and associated accounting code.

ABOUT US

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is the official non-profit partner of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, supporting its system of 18 marine environments from Massachusetts to American Samoa and the Great Lakes to the Florida Keys. We protect these iconic places, care for marine wildlife and habitats, honor our nation's maritime history and cultural traditions, and promote the enjoyment of these public waters through a combination of coalition-building, private fundraising and federal support.

In a quarter of a century, we've expanded and deepened people's connections and access to our ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes, and built partnerships with coastal communities and businesses alongside the over 629,000 square miles of public waters that belong to all Americans.

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.