



Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Grant Program

2021 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Applicant Webinar: **Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at 3:00 PM Eastern Time**
Full Proposal Due Date: **Wednesday, June 16, 2021 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) will award grants that catalyze the implementation of electronic technologies (ET) for fisheries catch, effort, and/or compliance monitoring, and improvements to fishery information systems in U.S. fisheries. We anticipate awarding up to \$3.5 million through this solicitation.

The Electronic Monitoring and Reporting (EMR) Grant Program will advance the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) sustainable fisheries goals to partner with fishermen and other stakeholders, state agencies, and Fishery Information Networks to systematically integrate technology into fisheries data collection and observations as well as streamline data management and use for fisheries management. Specifically, the EMR Grant Program will solicit proposals that develop and implement promising ET that improve the timeliness and quality of fisheries data; expand access and availability of data; increase knowledge of fisheries for management, industry and science purposes; improve regional data management systems and data interoperability; and empower fishermen and other citizens to become more actively involved in the data collection process. Examples of ET include any electronic tool used to support fisheries monitoring both onshore and at sea, including electronic reporting (e.g., e-logbooks, tablets, and other input devices), electronic monitoring (e.g., electronic cameras and gear sensors on-board fishing vessels), and vessel monitoring systems or electronic tools to improve data processing, management, or access.

The EMR Grant Program was created through a partnership with NOAA.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Grant Program is a national program and will consider proposals from all U.S. state and federal fisheries, including commercial or recreational sectors. Fisheries operating outside the U.S. are ineligible for funding under this opportunity.

Priority fisheries include the Gulf of Mexico reef fish fishery, the New England groundfish fishery, the West Coast groundfish fishery, and the Alaska halibut and groundfish fisheries. Fisheries nationwide are eligible to receive funding to support electronic monitoring and reporting efforts, including data management system modernization. (see [House Report 116-455 accompanying the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2021](#), p. 36).

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Proposals should address one or more of the program priorities listed below. All proposals should outline conservation benefits of the project. Monitoring change in project metrics and ET improvement or adoption over time should be a key aspect of project proposals. NFWF and partners intend to fund projects that have wide benefits for public resources including meeting conservation, management and stakeholder objectives. All proposals should describe how projects will promote interoperability with other fishery data systems, enhance data portability, and encourage consistent and easy access to data by authorized users. If applicable, proposals should explain how projects will accomplish NOAA Fisheries's regional ET priorities, as outlined in the ET Regional Implementation Plans. NOAA Fisheries anticipates sharing these plans in April 2021, at which time a link will be provided in the RFP. Where appropriate, projects that include preparation and dissemination of technical documentation of best practices and principles, including data formats and standards used will be more competitive.

1. ***E-technology in fishery data collection:*** Priority for projects that implement EMR strategies for the support of fisheries conservation and management, including:
 - a. Support the implementation of voluntary, cost-shared electronic monitoring and reporting programs, fishery data system developments, and software developments to improve the consistency, interoperability, quality, and usability of information to support sustainable fisheries management and conservation of marine resources;
 - b. Develop and implement regional-scale electronic monitoring and reporting strategies, such as fleet-wide and/or sector-scale solutions that have broad footprints in terms of the number of individuals they impact. Competitive proposals will demonstrate close coordination with relevant federal or state fishery management agencies;
 - c. Strengthen ET implementation and catalyze the adoption of electronic monitoring and reporting programs and fishery information system improvements consistent with the NOAA Fisheries regional ET priorities, or data collection programs identified by Regional Fishery Management Councils. NFWF encourages applicants to contact their regional NOAA Fisheries staff to understand these priorities, and consult the ET Regional Implementation Plans once available.

Generally, projects under this priority will improve reporting and monitoring of fisheries, including but not limited to assisting commercial and recreational fisheries with acquiring and deploying appropriate ET needed to increase accountability and address regional ET priorities and goals. This may include development of a clear regional roadmap with timelines to advance ET; innovative approaches, including incentives, to encourage and retain fishermen participation in improved monitoring; assessment of ET costs and benefits to date and in the future; and/or outreach to inform and encourage adoption of ET. Competitive proposals will include outreach and engagement of commercial, recreational fishermen, and/or other fishing businesses.

2. ***Modernize data management systems:*** Priority for projects that modernize data management systems in order to reduce costs and improve consistency, interoperability, quality, and/or usability of information collected using e-technology. Applicants should coordinate closely on data management with NOAA Fisheries and/or regional Fishery Information Networks, as appropriate. Eligible activities include:



- a. Build on successful EMR implementation projects that have spearheaded advancements in data transferability and demonstrated that such approaches will increase the quality, speed, and usability of fisheries data entering the management process.
- b. Improve capacity to ensure that electronic data being reported from the field are: 1) communicated and processed efficiently; 2) meet appropriate standards for chain of custody, confidentiality, and archiving; 3) meet rigorous standards needed for inclusion in stock assessments, catch accounting, and management (and provide at a minimum, trip level catch or discards at least by species and number); and 4) can be accessed from a variety of authorized applications.
- c. Explore or advance innovative data storage solutions (including cloud storage) to address questions of costs, access, and security across multiple data contributors and users including fishermen, managers, scientists, and other stakeholders.
- d. Develop tools and technology to reduce the cost of fisheries data collection and review (e.g., automated catch accounting and video analysis) as well as storage of large volumes of data (e.g., open-source software that minimizes the data to be stored, enables data access and interoperability, increases the speed of video review, and/or increases file compression).
- e. Explore the future direction of data modernization. Such an exercise may include convening stakeholders, establishing ET data and performance standards, developing a roadmap with timelines to advance data modernization, regional or fishery data visioning plans, and/or exploring opportunities to finance fisheries data collection and management using non-federal funds going forward.
- f. Test solutions to data availability challenges in areas with limited broadband access, such as rural communities and remote fishing grounds.
- g. Communicate ET and data modernization advancements and lessons learned across fisheries and across regions through sharing of best practices and technical documentation. This could include exploring costs of different types of ET programs.

Projects should seek to use one of the two following approaches when addressing the priorities listed below:

- 1) *Develop or pilot innovative ideas* – Competitive proposals will develop, test, and/or pilot innovative solutions and approaches to known fisheries and data management challenges. Innovations from all U.S. fisheries will be considered.
- 2) *Implement proven innovations at-scale* - Competitive proposals will scale-up proven innovations that are positioned to impact a significant portion of the fleet and/or multiple fishing communities. When applicable, such proposals will focus on the diffusion, adoption, and application of innovative strategies.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, a list of metrics for the EMR Grant Program is available in Easygrants. Applicants will choose from this list for future reporting. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the



table below). If an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact Gray Redding (Gray.Redding@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Example Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
<i>Example project activities are given for demonstration purposes only and are not meant to be inclusive of all activities that could be associated with a given metric.</i>	<i>Metrics available in the Easygrants full proposal application.</i>	<i>Please review the additional guidance carefully to determine if a given metric is appropriate for your project.</i>
Develop a formal plan to implement an EM/ER monitoring program or modernize data management systems.	Management or Governance Planning - # plans developed	Number of plans developed with input from multiple stakeholders and that identify monitoring or system improvement objectives. Examples of types of plans may include an implementation plan, operations plan, data management plan, software design document, etc.
Build capacity for electronic technology and data modernization.	Building institutional capacity - # FTEs with sufficient training	Number of staff or full-time equivalents with sufficient training and skills engaged in conservation activities. Provide the skills that the FTEs will have in the Notes section.
Participants agree to, and comply with, an incentive agreement (e.g., implementation plan, data sharing agreement, exempted fishing permit, vessel monitoring plan, etc.).	Participants complying with their incentive agreement - # participants in compliance	Number of participants complying with an incentive agreement developed through the project. Describe the type of incentive agreement in the Notes section.
Implement a regional-scale EM/ER monitoring program.	Monitoring - # vessels in monitoring program	Number of vessels directly engaged/participating in monitoring program(s).
Implement a regional-scale EM/ER monitoring program.	Monitoring - # of trips monitored using electronic technology	Number of fishing trips monitored using EM/ER technology over the grant period. In the notes, please specify total number of trips taken.



Engage government agencies and stakeholders in implementing ET or addressing data modernization challenges.	Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance- # gov't entities participating	Number of municipalities or specific government entities (at the local, state, and/or federal level) participating in the project. In the "Notes" section, please briefly list the entities and how they are participating.
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ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Tribal Governments and Organizations, educational institutions, commercial (for profit) organizations, and international organizations.
 - For-profit applicants: please note that this is a request for grant proposals, not a procurement of goods and services; see the Budget section below for specific cost considerations.
- Ineligible applicants include U.S. Federal government agencies, including Regional Fisheries Management Councils and unincorporated individuals.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- **Equipment:** Applicants are encouraged to rent equipment where possible and cost-effective or use matching funds to make those purchases. NFWF acknowledges, however, that some projects may only be completed using NFWF funds to procure equipment. If this applies to your project, please contact the program staff listed in this RFP to discuss options.
- Federal funds and matching contributions may not be used to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems (including entering into or renewing a contract) that uses telecommunications equipment or services produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) as a substantial or essential component, or as critical technology of any system. Refer to Public Law 115-232, section 889 for additional information.
- NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The EMR Grant Program will award approximately \$3.5 million in grants for the 2021 funding cycle. The majority of awards under this program will fall in the range of \$200,000 to \$500,000, although upper or lower limits to award size are not specified. Matching

contributions from non-federal sources (both cash and in-kind) must equal or exceed a 1:1 ratio (100% of the requested amount). Applicants will be prompted to include information on other sources of funding for the project in the application section entitled “Matching Contributions.” Project periods must start within six months of the award date and cannot exceed two years. All proposed project end dates should be before March 1, 2024.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness, and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

Program Goals and Priorities – Project contributes to the Program’s overall habitat and species conservation goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities.

Technical Merit – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, design and implementation to ensure activities are technically sound and feasible.

Cost-Effectiveness – Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation may include, but is not limited to, an assessment of either or both direct and indirect costs in the proposed budget. The federal government has determined that a *de minimis* 10% indirect rate is an acceptable minimum for organizations without a NICRA, as such NFWF reserves the right to scrutinize **ALL** proposals with indirect rates above 10% for cost-effectiveness.

Transferability – Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies. For projects with significant research and development costs or those at a pre-competitive stage, addressing how you will produce and share technical documentation of your work will be a key aspect of this transfer.

Communication – Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.

Funding Need – Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested, and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding.

Conservation Plan and Context – The project advances an existing conservation plan or strategy.

Monitoring – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Long-term Sustainability – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This should include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

Past Success – Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

Partnership – An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that leverages additional funds and will sustain it after the life of the grant. Identify proposed partners, if known (including potential or contemplated subawards to third party subrecipients of the applicant), the roles they will play in implementing the project, and how this project will build new or enhance existing partnerships. (Note: a project partner is any local community, non-profit organization, tribe, and/or local, state, and federal government agency that contributes to the project in a substantial way and is closely involved in the completion of the project.)

Match – Applicants must contribute a 1:1 non-federal matching contribution (100% of the award amount). Grant proposals with higher match rates may be more competitive.

OTHER

Budget – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF’s [Budget Instructions](#) cost categories. Federally-funded projects must be in compliance with [OMB Uniform Guidance](#) as applicable. This funding opportunity will award grants of federal financial assistance funds; applicants must be able to comply with the OMB Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200). While for-profit entities are eligible applicants, charges to a potential award may include actual costs only; recipients may not apply loaded rates or realize profit from an award of federal financial assistance funds.

Matching Contributions – Matching Contributions consist of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the Project during the Period of Performance. Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive during application review.

Procurement – If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, an award by NFWF to the applicant does not constitute NFWF’s express written authorization for the applicant to procure such specific services noncompetitively. When procuring goods and services, NFWF recipients must follow documented procurement procedures, which reflect applicable laws and regulations.

Publicity and Acknowledgement of Support – Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF’s financial support for the grant in press releases, publications and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by NFWF to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs depicting the project.

Receiving Award Funds – Award payments are primarily reimbursable. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF. A request of an advance of funds must be due to an imminent need of expenditure and must detail how the funds will be used and provide justification and a timeline for expected disbursement of these funds.



Compliance Requirements – Projects selected may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and National Historic Preservation Act. As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with additional Federal, state or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances.

Federal Funding – The availability of federal funds estimated in this solicitation is contingent upon the federal appropriations process. Funding decisions will be made based on level of funding and timing of when it is received by NFWF.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the Program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information ([Fisheries Innovation Fund](#)).

Applicant Webinar (Register Here)	May 4, 2021 at 3:00 PM EDT
Full Proposal Due Date	June 16, 2021 by 11:59 PM EDT
Review Period	June – July 2021
Awards Announced	Early November 2021

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Easygrants system.

1. Go to easygrants.nfwf.org to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.
2. Once on your homepage, click the “Apply for Funding” button and select this RFP’s “Funding Opportunity” from the list of options.
3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

To register for the webinar, please [click here](#).

A [Tip Sheet](#) is available for quick reference while you are working through your application.

Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website’s [Applicant Information](#) page.

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:

Gray Redding
Gray.Redding@nfwf.org



NFWF

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:

Easygrants Helpdesk

Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org

Voicemail: 202-595-2497

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.

Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.