



Maritime Blue

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Request for Proposals (RFP)

Washington Seaweed Processing Tech Analysis

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The purpose of this analysis is to explore the appropriate processing technologies, platforms, and supporting infrastructure for the developing seaweed aquaculture industry in Washington state. The analysis will account for both current and potential future production scales, identifying the necessary technologies and infrastructure to support the production of three specific product categories: dried food products, personal care items, and three types of agricultural soil inputs requiring increasing levels of processing to produce. The consultant will also investigate existing infrastructure in Washington that

could be accessed through shared-use agreements, including with reference to development plans by key players in the West Coast seaweed industry, to provide a comprehensive set of pathways to support industry growth.

Background

Maritime Blue is a strategic alliance propelling the Pacific Northwest toward global leadership in ocean-based innovation. We foster collaboration among industry, government, academia, communities, and investors to create sustainable maritime and ocean industries. Strategic focus areas include maritime decarbonization, renewable ocean energy, sustainable fisheries and seafood, healthy ocean ecosystems, and digital solutions.

Seaweed farming represents a form of aquaculture, often referred to as “mariculture,” with significant environmental benefits and economic potential. Washington state has two active seaweed farms, but barriers in access to processing technology and reliable markets have slowed growth and the state’s role and position within the broader regional seaweed market remain unclear. Washington benefits from a robust marine environment (inclusive of the Puget Sound, Salish Sea, and Pacific Ocean), well-developed transportation networks, diverse logistics capabilities, and established processing facilities for traditional seafood and agricultural foods. These systems provide a strong foundation crucial for the growth, distribution and commercialization of seaweed products, however gaps in capabilities and a lack of dedicated seaweed processing facilities must be addressed for the industry to reach its full potential.

Maritime Blue is administering an 18-month planning grant from the Builders Initiative to advance collaborative activities that will support Washington's emerging seaweed industry. Working with all of the established growers in the state, we aim to determine optimal approaches for market development, shared infrastructure, and industry growth. This project represents a key component of this effort.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The research and analysis performed as part of this contract will provide a practical resource for the Washington state seaweed industry, supporting farmer and investor decision-making around processing technologies able to support their needs. Specific objectives include:

- Identify the “best available” technologies on the market capable of creating the priority products identified by our Washington state seaweed farmers, with information on criteria that can inform investment decisions;
- Understand how these technologies might fit into the Washington state context and how this context would impact cost of investment and ROI;

- Understand the feasibility for *existing* processing infrastructure and technology in Washington to accommodate seaweed being produced in Washington (including current levels of production and potential increases in local production), as well as seaweed harvested in neighboring regions and imported to Washington state (i.e., Washington acting as a processing hub for the West Coast).

Scope of Work

The following tasks are intended to support Maritime Blue in understanding pathways for success for Washington's seaweed farmers, and to begin to explore Washington state's potential role as a processing hub for the region. This document will be for Maritime Blue and its partners' internal use, but elements may also be used to inform Maritime Blue's parallel scope of work to develop a *Roadmap to a Thriving Seaweed Farming Industry in Washington State*.

Note: Competitive candidates for this contract will demonstrate that they possess a deep enough understanding of the seaweed aquaculture and processing industry to be able to provide suggested adjustments or improvements to the scope outlined below to support achievement of these goals if needed, either at the project outset or during the course of the work.

Product Categories

Three markets of interest have been identified by active seaweed growers in Washington state as priority pathways for their harvests. The consultant will analyze and identify the appropriate processing equipment and facility characteristics (i.e. facility sizing; overall capital and operational costs of a facility; location considerations; etc) to support access to these three markets.

The first two are the priority markets of Lummi Island SeaGreens:

1. **Packaged food products** (i.e., "consumer packaged foods")
2. **Personal care products** (e.g., soaps, lotions, bath salts, etc.), especially for use in the hospitality industry

In addition, a third market is desired as a potential value added pathway for seaweed harvested that does not meet the quality standards of the first two markets. Promising results of pilot-scale research being done at shellfish farms in Washington state indicate that there is significant potential in utilizing nuisance algae (specifically *Ulva*) as a soil input in terrestrial farms in the region, and global research and industry progress has shown that sugar kelp can be used in this way as well. This analysis should thus explore the most appropriate processing technology to enable the monetization of *both* sugar kelp and *Ulva* (potentially in combination), specifically through creation of:

3. **Agricultural soil inputs**, potentially including a dried seaweed compost additive, a fermented seaweed "slurry," and a liquid seaweed biostimulant.

Project Tasks

Task 1: “Best Available” Seaweed Processing Technology and Infrastructure Analysis

The consultant will research and analyze the appropriate processing technologies required for the three priority product categories. This analysis will build on and integrate information currently being captured through a formal business planning process underway by the Lummi Island SeaGreens team which will include specifics on production capacity, steps and costs of processing tech and infrastructure currently being used, and projected product price points for chosen products based on current and potential production capacity. The consultant will build on this information by exploring potential additional processing infrastructure, through:

- **Technology and Infrastructure Identification:** Identify the range of processing technologies available to create each product type, and provide clear criteria to support selection by Washington growers and investors (e.g., processing technology A is the most energy efficient; processing technology B is the lowest cost; processing technology C is the most flexible; etc.). Special attention should be given to platforms that allow for the creation of multiple products from one harvest (i.e., “cascading” or “modular” processing tech), and consideration of volume capabilities should include the possibility of seaweed being imported to Washington for secondary processing from neighboring regions. Detail the specific equipment and infrastructure needed for each processing platform to get seaweed from harvest to market. This includes, but isn't limited to, equipment for cleaning, drying, milling, and extraction, as well as facility requirements (e.g., clean rooms, cold storage).
- **Context Analysis:** Assess the specific contextual factors that would impact cost and ROI of building these processing facilities in Washington state, considering factors like siting and permitting an existing or new building in different locations throughout the state (to be selected through discussions with the growers), proximity to existing processing platforms in neighboring states/ provinces, proximity to trade routes where seaweed harvested in neighboring regions might enter Washington, and accessibility for existing farms in Washington.
- **Cost Analysis:** Provide estimated investment costs for acquiring or building each type of processing platform in Washington state. These costs should be broken down into equipment, facility modifications, and other related expenses.
- **Product Pricing:** Estimate the price per unit of the resulting products at the point of consumer sale, taking into account processing costs, packaging, and market factors.
- **Recommendations:** Outline of appropriate processing technology and facility to support growers’ needs.

Task 2: Existing Shared-Use Infrastructure Assessment

Seaweed production in Washington state is currently very small scale, and it may not be

necessary or appropriate at this stage for growers to make a large investment in *new* processing technology or facilities. Washington state has well-established systems for processing and distributing other products, especially in the terrestrial agriculture, seafood, and specialty food sectors. Task 2 explores whether and to what extent the three priority products could be created by tapping into this existing infrastructure without needing additional technology.

Through outreach to key actors and desktop analysis, the consultant will explore existing infrastructure in Washington state's seafood and agriculture industries that could be used for processing seaweed to create one or more of the three priority products through shared-use agreements.

- **Identify Potential Facilities:** Research and identify existing seafood and agricultural processing facilities in reasonable proximity to potential aquaculture operations or trade lines, and with equipment suitable for handling seaweed, such as chillers, freezers, and drying equipment.
- **Determine Feasibility:** Assess the feasibility of using these facilities to produce one or more of the three priority products, considering factors like regulatory compliance (e.g., food safety certifications), seasonality, logistics, and potential conflicts with existing operations. The consultant should consider feasibility for accommodating seaweed being produced in Washington currently, potential increases in local production (based on other research done by MB and partners), and also the potential for and feasibility of accommodating seaweed harvested in neighboring regions and imported to Washington state (i.e., Washington acting as a processing hub for the West Coast).

DELIVERABLES

The consultant will produce a single, **comprehensive but concise (no more than 20 pages, including figures, but excluding executive summary and references cited) report** that synthesizes the findings from the two tasks outlined above, providing a practical resource for the Washington state seaweed industry. This report will be for Maritime Blue and its partners' internal use, although elements will be used to inform Maritime Blue's parallel scope of work to develop a *Roadmap to a Thriving Seaweed Farming Industry in Washington State*. The final product should include:

- **Executive Summary:** A concise overview of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
- **Best Available Processing Technology Analysis:** A detailed breakdown of the processing technologies and platforms available for the three product categories, including equipment lists, estimated costs, and potential product pricing, along with clear criteria to support selection and location of the best technology for the

Washington context.

- **Shared-Use Infrastructure Report:** A summary of existing and potential shared-use processing facilities in Washington, including a feasibility assessment for access by seaweed farmers in Washington and in neighboring regions along the West Coast.
- **Reference Cited,** including up to date sources for procurement of technologies examined in the report, as well as contact information for existing processing companies with potential to engage in shared-use agreements.

The final report must be completed no later than 3 months from the contract start date, with the final date confirmed at time of contracting. The schedule for completion of key milestones and delivery of sub-components of the final report (e.g., drafts) should be proposed by the contractor as part of the proposal (see Selection Criteria, below).

PAYMENT AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Total Budget is not to exceed \$25,000 over three months, inclusive of any expenses and travel costs (travel is not expected to be necessary to complete this project).

Payment schedule to be proposed by contractor as part of proposal (see Selection Criteria, below), with preference for milestone- and/or deliverable-based schedule.

APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

1. Contractors must not be suspended or debarred from doing business with the U.S. government.
2. Demonstrated experience with conducting technology comparison and feasibility analyses, with preference for those who have experience in aquaculture, mariculture and/or aquatic food industry analyses specifically.
3. The applicant must submit a formal Conflict of Interest (COI) Statement detailing any financial, organizational, or professional relationship with local entities, stakeholders, or individuals who stand to gain or lose financially from the outcome of this analysis. If a potential or actual COI is disclosed, the applicant must also provide an actionable Mitigation Plan detailing the specific measures (e.g., team isolation, use of independent third-party review) that will be implemented to ensure the complete integrity and impartiality of the project deliverables.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

We recognize that this RFP presents a relatively short turnaround time for submitting proposals. In light of this, and out of respect for prospective contractors' time, we are requesting that proposals be short and streamlined, without reference to additional research beyond capturing the contractor's experience and expertise. Please do not spend more than a few hours developing your proposal.

1. The proposal should be concise, no more than **10 pages** in length, not counting a cover page, references, resumes, or any appendices. Excessive use of unrelated images and company branding is discouraged. Longer proposals will be disqualified, and there is no requirement to fill the full 5 pages if qualifications can be articulated in fewer than 5 pages.
2. Pages shall be standard 8.5" x 11" letter size, using either Arial or Calibri font at 11-point size, with single-line spacing. All pages must maintain a minimum one-inch margin on all sides, and pages must be consecutively numbered. Proposals that do not adhere to these formatting specifications may be considered non-responsive and will not be evaluated.
3. The proposal must indicate primary staff contributing to the project and their roles (if relevant), and must include all relevant staff resumes in PDF format. Full details may be found in the Selection Criteria and Evaluation sections.
4. Proposals should include the following components:
 - a. **Cover Page** with short summary of your proposal and interest in the project, highlighting key strengths and differentiators. This will not contribute to the page limit.
 - b. **Qualifications and Experience:** Description of relevant experience and expertise, especially in technology analysis to support industry development. In particular, highlight any experience in the fields of aquaculture, mariculture, terrestrial agriculture, and/or food industry analyses.
 - i. Please also include your resume(s). These will not contribute to the page limit.
 - c. **Project Approach:** Short outline of the methodologies, strategies, and creative approaches, if any, that would be used to complete the study scope. Please include a proposed timeline and project management details (see Selection Criteria table below).

- d. **Cost Proposal:** Clearly outline the cost of your proposed services, including a detailed breakdown of all associated costs.
- e. **Compliance:** Confirm your willingness and ability to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and standards, and verify that you are not suspended or debarred from doing business with the U.S. government.
- f. **Conflict of Interest (COI) Statement:** Detail any financial, organizational, or professional relationship with local entities, stakeholders, or individuals who stand to gain or lose financially from the outcome of this analysis. If a potential or actual COI is disclosed, the applicant must also provide an actionable Mitigation Plan detailing the specific measures (e.g., team isolation, use of independent third-party review) that will be implemented to ensure the complete integrity and impartiality of the project deliverables.
- g. **Professional References:** Provide references from at least three clients for whom you have completed similar projects. These will not contribute to the page limit.

Proposal Submission Deadline

All proposals must be submitted by **December 10, 2025 at 11:59pm PST**. Late proposals will not be considered.

Submission Instructions

Proposal Submission Address:

Proposals should be submitted to willow@maritimeblue.org.

Please write "Seaweed Processing Technology Analysis Proposal - [your name/your company's name]" in the subject line of your email.

Point of Contact:

All questions and communications regarding this RFP should be submitted by **December 4, 2025 at 5:00pm PST**, and should be directed to:

Willow Battista
Sustainable Seafood Senior Program Manager, Washington Maritime Blue
willow@maritimeblue.org

PROPOSAL SCHEDULE

Milestone	Due Date
Issue Request for Proposals	Nov 19, 2025
Question period open	Nov 19, 2025
Webinar to answer questions	Dec 1, 2025, 12:00 PM PST
Last day to submit questions	Dec 4, 2025, by 5:00 PM PST
Proposals due	Dec 10, 2025, 11:59 PM PST
Proposal review complete	Dec 16, 2025
Possible interviews of prospective contractors	Dec 17-19, 2025
Announce "Apparent Successful Contractor" and send notification via email to unsuccessful proposers	Dec 23, 2025
Earliest date a contract could be signed with the Successful Contractor	Jan 5, 2026
Project complete	March 31, 2026

Maritime Blue reserves the right to revise the above schedule.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Projects will be reviewed by Maritime Blue staff. Members of the Washington Kelp Growers Collaborative may also support contractor selection.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Proposal completeness and compliance with RFP requirements
2. Contractor qualifications and experience
3. Proposed approach and methodology
4. Cost competitiveness
5. References

Selection Criteria

Each application will be scored for each criterion listed in the table below, with a maximum point value of 100 points. The evaluators will rate the proposal on each criterion. The sum of these scores determines the proposal's overall ranking. A point-based scoring system is a quantitative method for evaluating grant proposals.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	Points Possible
Qualifications, Experience, and Demonstrated Results <i>Evaluation includes assessment of contractor/ company history and experience as it relates to the project described in the RFP, evidence of past performance, quality and relevance of past work, references, and related items.</i> <u>Project management</u> • <i>Team structure and internal controls:</i> If more than one person will be executing the project, provide a description of the proposed team structure and internal controls to be used during the course of the project, including any subcontractors. Include who will have prime responsibility and final authority for the work. • <i>Reporting and working with Maritime Blue:</i> Proposals should address how they plan to make timely reports on progress to Maritime Blue staff, and whether that includes written reports, meetings, etc. <u>Staff qualifications</u> • Identify staff, including any subcontractors, who will be assigned to the potential contract, indicating the responsibilities and qualifications of such personnel. Provide resumes for the named staff, which include information on the individual's particular skills related to this project, education, experience, significant accomplishments and any other pertinent information. Staff identified in the Proposal must actually perform the assigned work. • The contractor must be able to demonstrate experience in aquatic and/or terrestrial farm production or product processing technology analysis. • Significant knowledge of Washington food infrastructure and West Coast seaweed aquaculture industry is preferred. • Demonstrated ability to complete projects that require interviewing stakeholders, including industry representatives. Demonstrated cultural competence in working across class, race, economic level, etc. preferred.	40 pts
Proposed Approach and Methodology <i>Evaluation includes assessment of the company's approach to the work and the capacity to perform the scope of work within the specified time frame.</i> • <i>Methodology:</i> Provide a brief proposal that addresses how the contractor plans to meet the objectives presented in this document, and all other project requirements • <i>Project and Payment Schedule:</i> Indicate when the elements of the work will be completed. Project schedule must ensure that any deliverables requested are met. Payment Schedule should be proposed that corresponds with key milestones and deliverables. • <i>Deliverables:</i> Summary of deliverable(s) to be submitted under the proposed contract, with delivery date(s) tied to Payment Schedule.	40 pts

Cost Competitiveness <i>Efficient use of resources and delivery of quality services in relation to budget. Allocation is reasonable and appropriate. Proposed budget may not exceed \$25,000 over three months, inclusive of all expenses and any travel costs.</i> - Detailed estimate of cost and time allocation of project funds, including a breakdown of staff structure as listed above. The proposal should include a fully detailed budget, in U.S. dollars, including staff costs and any expenses necessary to accomplish the tasks and to produce the deliverables under the contract. Proposers are required to collect and pay Washington state sales and use taxes if applicable. - Fair value should be demonstrated for project funding.	15 pts
Diversity in contracting participation Additional points possible for individuals or firms demonstrating either certified business enterprise (WMBE, etc.) or non-certified, but meeting criteria as small (under 20 employees), women-owned or operated, and/or BIPOC owned or operated.	5 pts

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Maritime Blue's standard terms and conditions are attached to this RFP.

Right to Reject Proposals

Maritime Blue reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received in response to this Request for Proposals (RFP). The rejection of a proposal may occur if, in the sole discretion of Maritime Blue, it is determined that the proposal does not meet the specified requirements, lacks key information, or if the proposer fails to comply with the terms and conditions outlined in this RFP.

Maritime Blue also reserves the right to reject any proposal, in whole or in part, if it is deemed in the best interest of Maritime Blue to do so. The decision to reject a proposal will be final, and Maritime Blue is under no obligation to provide feedback or justification for the rejection.

Vendors submitting proposals acknowledge this right of Maritime Blue and agree not to challenge or dispute the decision to reject any proposal. In the event of a rejection, Maritime Blue may, at its discretion, enter into negotiations with another vendor or reissue a revised Request for Proposals.

Maritime Blue appreciates the effort and resources invested by all participating vendors and will notify each vendor of the outcome of the proposal evaluation process.

Maritime Blue looks forward to receiving your proposal and appreciates your interest in working with us on this project. Should you have any questions or require further clarification, please contact Willow Battista at willow@maritimeblue.org.