

Project Title: Measuring Social Acceptance for Aquaculture

Program Office Sponsoring or Conducting this CSC Project: NMFS/Office of Aquaculture/Internal Competition for Aquaculture Funding (ICAF)

Authority for this CSC Project: CCSA; EO 12898 (Environmental Justice);

Purpose of this CSC Project: This project provides critical information to understand the factors that influence social acceptance of licenses for aquaculture, one of the noted major barriers to industry expansion.

Type(s) of Information Collected and From Whom It Is Collected: Semi-structured interviews and focus groups will be used to collect information from the public on perceptions of aquaculture and predicted impact of aquaculture expansion.

Use of the Information: The information will be used to inform and create a subsequent regional or national survey on the same topic.

Method(s) of Information Collection: NMFS will collect that information with in-person and/or virtual focus groups and in-person and/or virtual semi-structured interviews (via phone or Google Meet).

Affected Public: Individuals

Estimated Average Annual Number of Participants: 125

Estimated Average Annual Number of Responses per Participant: 1

Estimated Average Minutes per Response: 60

Estimated Average Annual Burden Hours: 125

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Participants in this CSC Project: \$1,250

Estimated Average Annual Costs to the Federal Government: \$93,000

Estimated Average Annual Number of Federal Government Employees (FTEs): 0.54

Recruitment and Retention Methods for Voluntary Participants (SSA item 1): This project will utilize existing regional aquaculture stakeholder lists developed through coordination with the project lead (A. Michaelis) and regional aquaculture staff to recruit participants for semi-structured interviews. Because participants will not be asked for continued or sustained involvement beyond the interview, retention is not needed.

Focus group participants will be recruited using a contracted company who specializes in research-oriented focus groups. These groups will be comprised of the public, with some specifications/guidance provided to the company to target diverse and community-representative participants (i.e., seeking diversity in representation within groups).

Gifts or Payments (SSA Item 9): We will not be providing any gifts or payments directly, but the focus group company contracted may compensate participants with refreshments and/or a small gift/cash incentive.

Annual and Multi-Year Schedules (SSA Item 16): This project will begin as soon as possible pending approval. If we are able to anticipate approval prior to the end of 2022, data collection will begin after January 1, 2023 and potentially continue through March 2024. Reports summarizing participant input will be completed by June 2024 and used to inform a related multi-regional survey on the topic. This survey is not part of the current CSC project and will be submitted to OMB for approval as a distinct research project in 2024.

Display OMB Control No. and Expiration Date (SSA Item 17): This information will be provided when individuals sign up to participate in this CSC project.

Statistical Methods:

1. Who will be surveyed and why is it appropriate to survey that group? This project does not utilize a survey and instead uses semi-structured interviews at an individual and focus group level to seek information related to aquaculture perceptions from both related stakeholders (individual interviews) and the more public (focus groups). Information shared during these interviews/focus groups will be used to create a subsequent survey used to assess social acceptability for and awareness of aquaculture amongst the general public (local communities) in coastal counties of the Gulf of Mexico and southern California. (The survey will be submitted to OMB as a distinct research project in 2024.) As such, stakeholders relevant to aquaculture planning and the public represent an appropriate group to sample to help inform this future research effort.

2. How was the survey developed including consultation with interested parties, pretesting, and responses to suggestions for improvement? The focus group and semi-structured interview questions were developed by the researchers (Michaelis and Lemoine) and were informed through related work conducted by both in the regions of interest. This related work includes extensive participatory research with aquaculture stakeholders along the Gulf Coast (Michaelis), dissertation research focused on shellfish aquaculture and a specific offshore aquaculture project permitted off of Florida (Lemoine), as well as oral history interviews collected earlier this year in both regions that center on how aquaculture has or may influence community changes (Michaelis). Though no formal pretesting is planned, interview design is semi-structured to allow questions to be adapted to particular audiences (e.g., in some parts of the Gulf Coast mariculture rather than aquaculture is the term used to describe nearshore cultivation of shellfish). The flexibility inherent in a semi-structured approach also allows project participants to present ideas and topics not already identified by the researchers.

3. How will the survey be conducted, how will the population be sampled if fewer than all of the population will be surveyed, what is the expected response rate, and what actions does NOAA plan to take to improve the response rate? This project will utilize existing regional aquaculture stakeholder lists developed through coordination with the project lead (A. Michaelis) and regional aquaculture staff to recruit participants for semi-structured interviews. Interviews are intended to supplement views not captured in focus groups. Based on previous work with stakeholders from these regional lists, we expect between a 25-50% positive response rate, but point out that these interviews emphasize quality of information provided not quantity.

The aim is not to interview an entire population or even a sample that is representative of that entire population, but to ensure that a broad diversity of viewpoints are captured between focus groups and interviews. This breadth will help to create a more rigorous survey instrument in the subsequent project with content and questions that more accurately reflect regional perspectives or concerns on aquaculture.

Focus group participants will be recruited using a contracted company who specializes in research-oriented focus groups. These groups will be comprised of the public, with some specifications/guidance provided to the company to target diverse and community-representative participants (i.e., seeking diversity in representation within groups). The company contracted for this effort will have demonstrated success in focus group recruitment and we will rely on their proven approaches to ensure reasonable response rates. Overall, the project includes a maximum of 25-30 focus groups across a very broad regional scale. We do not expect recruitment for a single focus group in a community to be problematic.

4. How will NOAA analyze the results of the survey and generalize the results to the entire population? This is not a survey and we will not generalize the results of interviews and focus groups to the entire population.

5. What is the contact information for individuals consulted on the statistical aspects of the design, and for the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency? The contact information should include name, title, affiliation, email address, and telephone number.

- Adriane Michaelis, PhD, Social Scientist with ECS under contract with NOAA Fisheries (Southeast Fisheries Science Center). adriane.michaelis@noaa.gov, 305-209-5489 (Google Voice number).
- Hayley Lemoine, Research Associate with ECS under contract with NOAA Fisheries. hayley.lemoine@ecstech.com. ECS/NMFS phone number not assigned yet.

Approval for Pretesting: This CSC project will not require additional pretesting with more than nine members of the public.

Supplemental Documents: The three supplemental documents for this CSC project are as follows:

1. Invitation to participate in semi-structured interviews
2. Invitation to participate in focus groups
3. Interview guide (used for both semi-structured interviews and focus groups)

CERTIFICATION: I certify the following are true.

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The collection will not include highly influential scientific information, which is information NOAA or OMB determines: (i) could have a potential impact of more than

\$500 million in any year, or (ii) is novel, controversial, or precedent setting or has significant interagency interest.

5. The collection complies with 5 CFR 1320.9 and the related provisions of 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3).
6. The collection will provide qualitative and quantitative data that help inform scientific research and monitoring, validate models or tools, support STEM learning, and enhance the quantity and quality of data collected to support NOAA's mission.

Name: Adriane Michaelis