



## Request for Proposal

### Noyo Ocean Science Center (OCS) Blue Economy Feasibility Study

Date: June 26, 2023 | Contact info: [paloma@westcenter.org](mailto:paloma@westcenter.org)

## INTRODUCTION

West Center, in collaboration with the Noyo Center for Marine Science (“Noyo Center”) is seeking to retain the services of a consultant or agency (“Consultant”) to prepare a Blue Economy Feasibility Study for the future development of Noyo’s Ocean Science Center (OSC) that includes:

1. **A Blue Economy Business Incubation strategy** that identifies key factors of regenerative blue economy business models and define the best structures (e.g. incubator, accelerator, coworking space, etc.) to support the launch of innovative businesses and promote opportunities for high-wage skilled jobs. Mapping of OSC services – combined with other regional opportunities such as financing, education, training and strategic partnerships– will help meet the needs of future entrepreneurs.
2. **A Comprehensive Business Plan** for the OSC that will enable the Noyo Center to create a capital development strategy and revenue streams necessary to sustain operations. Recommendations to be provided for Noyo Center to attract or develop partnerships based on the blue economy incubation strategy.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2020, Noyo Center acquired 11.6 acres of a former Georgia-Pacific Lumber Mill site from the City of Fort Bragg for the express purpose of establishing a world class marine science center as a cornerstone of the region’s economic development strategy. Subsequently, Noyo Center formed as a nonprofit organization to:

- Establish the Ocean Science Center (OSC) on the former mill site from which to conduct marine science research and educate visitors and students;
- Strengthen STEM educational opportunities throughout the region;
- Generate sustainable economic opportunities that create jobs and resiliency within the regional economy.



While this project is physically located within Fort Bragg, its benefits will be distributed across Mendocino County and the north coast region of California. By helping reforge the region's relationship to the blue economy – the cluster of resources and industries that are dependent upon the sea, including fishing, trade, tourism, marine science education, research, renewable energy, marine biotech, and aquaculture –this project will have cascading benefits far beyond the geographic location.

Conceptual designs for the OSC were completed in 2019. In parallel to this Feasibility Study, the Noyo Center will be completing the schematic design phase for the OSC. The Blue Economy Feasibility Study will identify potential blue economy initiatives that the OSC is well-suited to support. If needed, adjustments to the OSC design can be evaluated to optimize the OSC's ability to support blue economy initiatives and/or business incubation.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

### **1. Blue Economy Incubation Strategy:**

- Define the current blue economy ecosystem in the region and its growth potential.
- Define necessary educational and technical assistance programs, infrastructure, facilities, capital, and workforce needed to support the capacity of future blue economy entrepreneurs in the region. Identify models (in other communities) that can serve as examples for the region.
- Develop and execute a data gathering plan to gain insight into potential blue economy partners, entrepreneurs, and relevant organizations and institutions, as well as comparable facilities and/or programs in other regions that will support blue economy endeavors.
- Identify the OSC's potential competitive advantage for private investment opportunities and what areas of investment would be most relevant.
- Provide OSC-specific recommendations as to:
  - Potential partners and collaborators that Noyo Center should focus on for implementation of blue economy initiatives utilizing facilities and resources of the OSC.
  - Based on a gap analysis, define priority actions for other local entities (local cities and tribes, County of Mendocino, the Noyo Harbor District, Mendocino-Lake Community College)to undertake in support of the blue economy.
  - Help define the optimal role for the Noyo Center and the OSC in supporting the regional blue economy.



## 2. OSC Business Plan:

- **A market analysis** of OSC's potential competitive advantages and services in the region. Include descriptions of types of revenue generating services to be offered and various business models for marine research and education centers along with their value proposition to OSC researchers, blue economy entrepreneurs, and visitors. Identify existing and emerging obstacles and/or insufficiencies in the region. For example, barriers may take the form of anticipated shortfalls in human capital, permitting and zoning, housing, manufacturing capacity and specialized product or support services, etc. that threaten growth to the industry.
- **An operational plan** including modeling of projected operating costs and a revenue and expense analysis. The operational plan should also identify functions of key management and staff positions, strategic relationships with other agencies/entities, administrative issues, and layout a strategy for preparing the organization to launch the OSC. Please note that design of the OSC systems - and the costs to run them - may be impacted by any additional blue economy initiatives identified in the gap analysis and may necessitate iterations between the design team and the consultants. Access to seawater is an impediment that will need to be addressed.
- **A financial plan** to develop the Noyo Center's revenue and profitability models and to determine the amount of capital necessary to ensure the sustainability of OSC, including internal strategies and detail on how to monetize the overall vision for the OSC.

## PROPOSAL CONTENT

Each proposal must outline specific tasks that will be undertaken, demonstrate the Consultant's approach and knowledge base, and explain the methodology that will be used to complete the tasks. At a minimum, proposals should include the following components:

1. Summary of the qualifications of the consultant team.
2. Understanding of the project's objectives.
3. Detailed scope of services for Blue Economy Feasibility Study, including a narrative explaining each work task.
4. Key deliverables.
5. Project timeline.
6. Project budget.
7. Consultant team members qualifications and their roles.
8. List of references.



## EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

A West Center/Noyo Center Advisory Committee will be established to provide support for and oversight of Consultant's work. Consultant should plan for coordinating with this committee prior to award of the contract.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Expertise and understanding of the blue economy sector.
- Past experience in developing the tasks outlined in the scope of work.
- Specialized knowledge of California's ocean resources and its competitive assets.
- Experience with business cost analysis for a public or nonprofit research and/or education center.
- Qualifications of staff assigned to project.
- Quality of three relevant references.
- Cost structure.

## PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Proposals must be received by 3:00 pm PST on **September 8, 2023**. Submit proposals via email to [Paloma@westcenter.org](mailto:Paloma@westcenter.org); **Subject title: Noyo OSC Feasibility Proposal <Company name of applicant>**. For inquiries and questions call 707-234-8951 weekdays 9-5 pm PST.

All eligible proposals will be reviewed and finalized by the West Center/Noyo Center Advisory Committee. All agencies submitting proposals will be notified via email or mail on the status and the final selection no later than October 15, 2023.

If there is more than (1) one vendor for final consideration, the committee may require the final vendors to appear for a remote interview or provide additional information to determine the final selection.

West Center anticipates awarding a single contract to procure the services needed in by October 1, 2023, with the work to be completed by April 2024. The anticipated project budget range is approximately \$65k - \$85K and is subject to final terms negotiated under a professional services contract. West Center reserves the right to negotiate final terms with the successful proposer. West Center also reserves the right to negotiate amendments to the contract for additional market analyses or consulting related to the project without conducting a new consultant solicitation process.



### **ABOUT West Business Development Center**

**West Business Development Center** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization funded primarily by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). It provides reliable no-cost confidential counseling and relevant training programs to entrepreneurs throughout Mendocino and Lake County. West Center hosts the [Mendocino Small Business Development Center](#) and the [Mendocino Women's Business Center](#)  
[www.westcenter.org](http://www.westcenter.org) | 707 964 7571 | Locations: 345 N. Franklin St. Fort Bragg, CA & 181 E. Church St. Ukiah, CA

### **ABOUT Noyo Marine Science Center**

**Noyo Center for Marine Science** advances ocean conservation through education, exploration and experience and operates from three locations in Fort Bragg; The Discovery Center Natural History Museum in downtown Fort Bragg, the Crow's Nest Interpretive Center on the Noyo Headlands, and the Slack Tide Café in Noyo Harbor.  
[www.noyocenter.org](http://www.noyocenter.org) | 338 N. Main Street, Fort Bragg, CA | (707) 733-6696