

**Massachusetts Ocean Partnership**

**Request for Proposals  
To Support the Development of MOP's  
Comprehensive Strategic Communications Plan**

**July 11, 2008**

## **Introduction**

The Massachusetts Ocean Partnership (“MOP” or “the Partnership”) is seeking a qualified consultant or team of consultants (“Consultant”) to support the development of its comprehensive strategic communications (StratCOM) plan to guide the Partnership’s internal and external communications and outreach as it participates in the creation and implementation of an Integrated Multi-use Ocean Management (IMUOM) plan for Massachusetts. A successful StratCOM plan will expand stakeholder understanding of IMUOM and directly enhance the Partnership’s and Commonwealth’s efforts to develop an effective and durable integrated ocean management plan. The Consultant will develop a mission-driven StratCOM plan that will help the Partnership to: (1) accurately identify and understand appropriate target audience groups; (2) set specific and measurable StratCOM objectives that support MOP’s programmatic goals; (3) develop tailored messaging; (4) choose effective communication strategies/vehicles, and (5) define processes for the evaluation, refinement and redirection of our strategic communications efforts over time. The StratCOM plan should build upon the format and utilize the goals and objectives set forth by the MOP Five Year Strategic Plan which can be accessed at <http://www.mopf.org/MOPFStrategicPlan.pdf>.

The focus of MOP’s overall communication and outreach strategy for this five-year planning horizon is to design, conduct and support communications projects that advance IMUOM in Massachusetts by targeting specific audiences affected by ocean-use management. In the near term, the Partnership will play a significant role by engaging stakeholders in active joint problem-solving efforts and by improving the integration of science with management decision making. A longer-term aspect of MOP’s outreach strategy is a broader effort to support the development of an informed and engaged public constituency for stakeholder informed, science based ocean use management. In both areas, MOP will seek to initiate new activities, independently or in collaboration with others, where there are currently gaps, and to support mission-relevant outreach by other entities, thereby leveraging resources and avoiding duplication of effort.

## **Background**

MOP is a public-private partnership created to advance integrated multi-use ocean management in support of sustainable marine industries and ecosystem stewardship leading to resilient and productive ocean ecosystems in MA waters. Initiated in 2006 with support from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, MOP partners—including government decision makers, marine-dependent industry, scientists, and conservation and education organizations—developed a Five Year Strategic Plan to foster collaborative problem solving on ocean management issues and develop information, tools and processes to improve the integration of science with ocean management. The partnership is now implementing the Strategic Plan, including its communication/outreach program, with funding through 2010. For more information, please visit our website at [www.MOPF.org](http://www.MOPF.org).

The Partnership's vision for an effective IMUOM plan that supports sustainable marine industries *and* ecosystem stewardship is one that:

- integrates management across sectors, resources and agencies;
- builds on ecosystem-based management principles by taking into account interactions among ecological and socioeconomic/human use considerations and the effects of those on ecosystem goods and services in a spatially explicit manner;
- evaluates ecological and economic tradeoffs across sectors;
- reflects input from an intensive public process in order to gain the support of major affected groups and organizations; and
- establishes a process for monitoring and adapting the plan to respond to changing conditions.

The Massachusetts "Oceans Act," signed into law this May, directs the state to develop an ocean management plan no later than December 31, 2009. Massachusetts is poised to become the first state in the nation to implement statewide integrated ocean management through considered balancing of a full range of uses— including offshore renewable energy development, fishing, maritime shipping, recreation, conservation and many others.

### **Description of Work**

The primary deliverable sought under this contract is an effective StratCOM plan for the Partnership. A successful StratCOM plan will support the objectives of MOP's communications program which are to:

- convey the strong, credible, and enduring presence of the Partnership;
- identify and address barriers to IMUOM;
- clearly articulate the benefits of IMUOM to specific target audiences;
- develop tailored messaging to broadly and effectively communicate the role and benefits of MOP;
- translate IMUOM, ecosystem-based management, ecosystem services, and related complex science-based topics into audience-appropriate language;
- strengthen current partnerships/relationships;
- expand MOP partnership in number and diversity;
- engage reluctant stakeholders/prospective partners (encourage participation) to support IMUOM;
- engage audiences in exploration of and problem-solving in ocean management issues;
- communicate progress, provide synthesis and analysis to decision makers including the MOP Governing Board, constituent groups, the media and others;
- link to IMUOM efforts/programs in other geographic areas;
- improve communication between science, policy, management and other stakeholder groups; and
- document MOP events and progression.

The Consultant will work in collaboration with MOP staff, Governing Board, and Communications Committee members to develop a StratCOM plan that will clearly prescribe near-term goals (0-18mos), mid-term goals (18-36 months), and finally, overarching communication goals extending out approximately 60 months. The Consultant may be directed to coordinate efforts with other consultant teams at the request of the Communications and Outreach Manager. In developing the detailed StratCOM plan, the Consultant will perform tasks to assist the Communications and Outreach Manager and the Partnership to: (1) accurately identify and understand appropriate target audience groups; (2) set specific and measurable StratCOM objectives that support MOP's programmatic goals; (3) develop tailored messaging; (4) choose effective communication strategies/vehicles, (5) identify/estimate resource needs for plan implementation, (6) inventory existing and planned ocean outreach communications programs in Massachusetts, (7) identify opportunities for communications collaboration with Partners' to leverage resources and enhance effectiveness, and (8) define processes for periodic evaluation, refinement and redirection of MOP's strategic communications efforts. MOP anticipates subsequent procurement of professional services to assist in implementation of the programs and activities identified in the StratCOM plan.

All MOP communications that are ultimately derived from/within the comprehensive StratCOM plan should be clear, concise, and consistent, tailored to specific target audiences, and clearly support measurable StratCOM objectives. MOP messaging is expected to utilize all appropriate strategies/vehicles including (but not limited to) the following:

- Print/text/e-communications— Press releases, news articles, op-eds, trade magazines, letters to the editor, brochures, flyers, feature stories, billboards, posters, newsletters, reports (white papers), advertisements, surveys, scientific papers, website, blogs, e-mail, listserv, online forum, etc.
- Face-to-Face— Seminars, speeches, traveling exhibits, press briefings, press conferences, partner meetings, focus groups, workshops, social gatherings (receptions, parties), etc.
- Audio— Radio interviews, phone calls, audio teleconferencing, podcasts, etc.
- Audio/Video— TV news, TV advertising, video documentary, talk shows, community access channel, video teleconferencing, CD/DVD, video news release, etc.
- Alternative Media— Bumper stickers, buttons, mugs, tote bags, banners, t-shirts, hats, etc.
- Innovative Combined Media— Webinars, etc.

### **Qualifications, Skills and Expertise**

MOP seeks a Consultant with the expertise, demonstrated skills, and proven experience necessary to assist in the StratCOM plan development tasks outlined above. The Consultant must be able to work flexibly in a changing environment. The Consultant's expertise, skills and experience should include the following:

- Extensive experience, theoretical grounding and proven success in designing and implementing strategic communications plans for multi-stakeholder, scientifically complex collaborative public policy processes in a politically-charged, deadline-driven environment;
- Proven experience designing and delivering communications plans and products that measurably

enhance an organization's capacity to effectively meet their mission objectives;

- A demonstrated proficiency with a wide variety of relevant software applications and related technologies;
- An exemplary ability to communicate effectively with a broad range of audiences and develop quality materials that are tailored to different audiences' needs; and a
- Familiarity with historical and current ocean management issues in the broader Gulf of Maine / northeastern region (optional).

### **Terms**

Deliverables under this RFP will include a draft and final StratCOM plan by September 30 and October 15, 2008 respectively. The Consultant will report directly to the MOP Communications and Outreach Manager and will receive organized advice from MOP senior staff and the MOP Communications Committee. The Consultant is expected to coordinate plan development efforts effectively utilizing electronic communication, in-person meetings or other appropriate means. The contract executed with the Consultant will be administered through Third Sector New England ("TSNE") as MOP's core operations administrator.

### **Proposal Requirements**

Responders should submit a proposal to the MOP Communications and Outreach Manager for electronic receipt no later than 5pm on July 30, 2008. Electronic submissions should be submitted as a single PDF and directed to Howard Krum, Communications and Outreach Manager at [hkrum@mopf.org](mailto:hkrum@mopf.org). A copy of the full submission should be cc'd to: Dionne Brown, TSNE Fiscal Sponsorship Program Administrator at [dbrown@tsne.org](mailto:dbrown@tsne.org).

Responders should also submit one hard copy each, postmarked no later than July 30, 2008 to: Howard Krum, Communications and Outreach Manager, MA Ocean Partnership, University of MA/Boston, Healey 10<sup>th</sup> Fl. 100 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02125 and to: Dionne Brown, 89 South Street, Suite 700 Boston, MA 02111.

At a minimum, all submittals must include:

1. A cover letter;
2. A concise statement (3 pages maximum) demonstrating the team's understanding of the project, indicating how the team meets the desired qualifications, skills and expertise;
3. A scope of work including proposed work plan and budget;
4. A description of the team's qualifications, including resumes for key personnel, summaries of successfully completed relevant projects and associated deliverables (with excerpted examples/demonstration products), and a description of each team member's role in those projects;
5. A description of the team's structure, each team member's role, and the lead contact from each sub-consultant (if applicable); and

6. A statement identifying matching resources (if any), including cash, in-kind services, and solid funding leads or similar projects currently under consideration for funding.

**Proposal Review**

A MOP Selection Committee will evaluate proposals based on the team’s qualifications, understanding of the project, proven relevant experience, and cost effectiveness. When considered together, these criteria will provide the committee its basis to evaluate the overall value of each proposal with the aim of securing the most advantageous arrangement to meet the goals of the project. Selection of the preferred consultant is expected to be a two-step process in which short-listed consultant teams will be asked to provide oral presentations to the MOP Selection Committee, after which the Committee will recommend a preferred consultant team for approval by MOP’s Governing Board. The Committee may choose to forego oral presentations if a clearly preferred candidate emerges based solely on response to this solicitation.

**MOP contact:**

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