

MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Sanctuary Integrated Monitoring Network (SIMoN)

PROJECT FUNDING PROCESS SUMMARY

The Sanctuary Integrated Monitoring Network (SIMoN) has been designed in partnership with the regional science and management community to identify natural and human induced changes to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS). The integration of high quality scientific research and long-term monitoring data sets through this program will furnish the information needed for effective management and provide a greater basic understanding of the Sanctuary, its resources and its processes. The principal goals of SIMoN are to: (1) integrate existing monitoring conducted in the MBNMS, (2) initiate basic surveys or characterizations of all habitats and regions of the MBNMS, (3) initiate specific, question driven monitoring efforts with fixed durations, (4) establish a series of essential long-term monitoring efforts that will continue into the future, and (5) provide timely and pertinent information to managers and decision makers, the research community, and the general public.

The SIMoN program will utilize existing data sets, support and augment current research/monitoring efforts, and initiate new efforts to address important gaps in our knowledge of the Sanctuary and its resources. The strength of this program is that the MBNMS will serve as the hub for regional ecosystem monitoring. Local scientists will continue to collect the large majority of monitoring data, but the Sanctuary will help generate much of the funds required to maintain or expand some existing efforts and to initiate new programs. Because of its close relationship with the Sanctuary and flexibility in managing the finances of programs, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation (a private, nonprofit corporation) will receive all funds secured for SIMoN projects and will administer budget and accounting matters.

A Science Committee has also been established to help guide MBNMS staff in developing specific monitoring focuses for the Sanctuary and advise on requests for proposals for programs to be funded by SIMoN. The committee will provide insight to MBNMS staff on the scientific and management merit of proposed and ongoing research, site characterizations and monitoring programs within the Sanctuary. The Science Committee shall meet a minimum of two times per year, one day each summer (June - July) to identify which priority area of need should be addressed in the next SIMoN funding cycle and to generate the framework for specific requests for proposals (RFPs) and one day each winter (February - March) to recommend funding strategies, comment on proposal finalists for that particular year and evaluate ongoing programs. During the Summer Session, the SIMoN staff will present to the Science Committee a working list of focused priority topics for characterizing and monitoring the Sanctuary and propose funding levels given the total budget available for that particular year. The focused list will be generated directly from the "areas of need" produced in the MBNMS Monitoring Workshop held in April 2000 (or on subsequent workshops to update areas of need) and from current MBNMS management priorities. The Science Committee will then amend the list as necessary.

A final list of topics to be addressed by SIMoN for that particular funding cycle will be selected and prioritize based on criteria such as consistent with the overall goals of the MBNMS, urgency, and importance beyond the MBNMS boundaries. For each topic on the final priority list, the Science Committee will identify the essential parameters that must be included in any new SIMoN funded programs to address the particular issues and identify a range of funding that will be sufficient and fit within the overall SIMoN budget. After the Summer Session, draft RFPs for each new monitoring effort to be funded will be written by the SIMoN staff and circulated by e-mail for review only if desired by individual Science Committee members.

The SIMoN office must receive pre-proposals, of no more than three pages, describing the work planned by May 20 for full proposals to be considered. Each must contain a summary of the type of work to be performed (including general sampling design and analysis), the location(s) of the proposed work, how it will address the needs of the MBNMS and will fit within the larger SIMoN effort, a brief description of the qualifications of all personnel involved, and a basic budget outline. MBNMS staff will then evaluate all pre-proposals for their ability to address specific monitoring and management needs and those that qualify will be asked to submit a full proposal. Primary Investigators of pre-proposals not selected will be notified with explanations on why their proposed work did not fit the needs of MBNMS. Full proposals must follow the format described below (see Proposal Format) and are due no later than August 15. Any future modifications of the proposal format to better suit the needs of SIMoN will be listed in the requests for proposals and on the SIMoN web site.

All full proposals will first be sent out for thorough and objective review to between two and four scientists, not affiliated with the MBNMS office, who are experts in the particular fields represented by the proposal. External reviewers will be asked to score the proposed activities based on scientific merit, feasibility and broader impacts of the work. MBNMS staff and the Science Committee will then evaluate proposals and external reviews for their ability to provide the specific information needed for resource management decisions and a broader, long-term understanding of the Sanctuary. From this process, a final list of proposals will be ranked from highest to lowest priority. Funding will then be determined based on the budget available for that particular year and distributed by the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation by January 15.

ANNUAL FUNDING TIMELINE

Mar. - Apr.	April 20	May 20	June 15	August 15	October 15	Nov. - Dec.	January 15
Science Committee Spring Session	Request for pre-proposals are released	Pre-proposals are due	Full proposals requested	Full proposals are due	External peer reviews are due	Science Committee Fall Session	Selections made and funding provided

FUNDING CONTRACT

Each contract to establish new monitoring efforts will officially be made between the Sanctuary Foundation, primary investigators, and their home institution or organization. Unlike many funding sources, a primary goal of SIMoN is to provide timely information for management decisions. Therefore, as part of all funding contracts, each new SIMoN effort will be responsible for providing the following to allow rapid information dissemination by SIMoN staff:

- Detailed materials, methods, and maps of study area(s) within two months of receiving initial funding and all protocol updates as they occur
- Continuous access to all data in a standardized format
- Periodic site visits and personal contact with SIMoN staff
- Statistical summaries, progress reports, and budget updates every six months;
- Participation in SIMoN annual symposia
- A comprehensive final report with literature review
- Eventual publication of results in a peer-reviewed journal when possible

Noncompliance or deviation from work described in full proposals may result in voiding of contract and termination of funding.

FUNDING DURATION

As described in the goals of SIMoN, two basic types of programs will be established to address gaps in our knowledge of the Sanctuary, its resources and its processes. Fixed duration programs will be funded for periods of typically one to three years to characterize components of the MBNMS or to answer specific management questions. However, it is also the goal of SIMoN to establish basic long-term monitoring programs throughout the Sanctuary. Depending on the nature of these programs, funding will be provided in three to five year intervals with rigorous reviews by the Science Committee (and external scientists when appropriate) after each term before subsequent intervals are funded.

UNSOLICITED PROPOSALS

Pre-proposals on topics other than those identified in annual RFPs can be considered for review if approved in advance of by the SIMoN Program Manager and must comply with the guidelines and deadlines listed for the normal funding process. The Science Committee will consider all unsolicited pre-proposals before a decision is made regarding submittal of a full proposal. If a full proposal is requested they will follow the same procedure described above.

SPECIFIC FOCUS PROGRAMS

In addition to the operating budget secured by the Sanctuary, SIMoN can be used to direct the science and the administer funds from other external programs. Individual programs or organizations that would like to join the Sanctuary Integrated Monitoring Network and administer their funds through the objective, structured process described above (identifying priority topics, generating RFPs, reviewing proposals and funding new efforts) are invited to contact the MBNMS Superintendent or the SIMoN Program Manager.

RAPID RESPONSE PROGRAMS

Occasionally unforeseen events or phenomena occur that can dramatically alter habitats, communities, populations or human health. The ephemeral nature of these events also makes extraordinary changes difficult to study and funding has traditionally not been available for the comprehensive investigations on short notice. SIMoN has therefore been designed with the ability to quickly respond to unusual or dramatic changes to resources of the Sanctuary with efforts to determine causes and quantify impacts.

Researchers or programs that identify extraordinary events or trends can apply for rapid response funding by contacting the SIMoN Program Manager with their intent and submitting a pre-proposal (described above). Conversely, if the SIMoN Program identifies an unforeseen event, rapid RFPs can be released outside of the normal schedule at the discretion of the SIMoN Program Manager. When possible, pre-proposals will be reviewed during a Science Committee meeting session, however SIMoN staff have the authority to fund rapid response programs with the approval of the MBNMS Superintendent.

In the rare case that a dramatic event occurs requiring an immediate investigation, limited SIMoN funds can be released directly to MBNMS staff or local contractors for an initial urgent response at the discretion of the MBNMS Superintendent.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

1. All pages must be numbered and the total length must not exceed 15 pages.
2. Proposals must have 2.5 cm margins at the top, bottom and on each side. The type size must be clear and readily legible, and conform to the following three requirements: 1) the height of the letters must not be smaller than 12 point; 2) type density must be no more than 15 characters per 2.5 cm; (for proportional spacing, the average for any representative section of text must not exceed 15 characters per 2.5 cm); and 3) no more than 6 lines must be within a vertical space of 2.5 cm. The type size used throughout the proposal must conform to all three requirements. While line spacing (single-spaced, double-spaced, etc.) is at the discretion of the proposer, established page limits must be followed.

While the guidelines specified above establish the minimum type size requirements, Principle Investigators are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal.

3. Proposal Sections

- A. Title Page (including name, institution, address, phone, fax and e-mail of Project Directors/Principle Investigators and co-Principal Investigators)
- B. Project Summary
- C. Table of Contents
- D. Project Description (including how proposed work is related to the MBNMS/SIMoN and results from Prior MBNMS/SIMoN Support)
- E. References Cited
- F. Biographical Sketches - Information on Project Directors/Principle Investigators, co-Principal Investigators and other support staff, including lists of publications pertinent to proposed work.
- G. Proposal Budget (cumulative and annual budgets, including subaward budget(s), if any, and up to two pages of Budget Justification)
- H. Current and Pending Support
- I. Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources
- J. Special Information and Supplementary Documentation

Appendices can be included only if approved in advance of proposal submission by SIMoN Program Manager and lists of suggested reviewers or reviewers not to include are optional.

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is committed to providing equal opportunities for participation in the SIMoN program and promoting the full use of regional research resources.