

## **FAQS for Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative investigator call**

May 1, 2019

### Eligibility

#### **What are the eligibility requirements?**

To be eligible for this competition, applicants must:

- a. Hold a tenured or tenure-track position (or equivalent) for a minimum of four years, with the first appointment no later than June 3, 2015;
  - i. We request applicants have been in a tenure-track or equivalent position since June 3, 2015. Applicants who began their tenure-track (or equivalent) position more recently than June 3, 2015 are not eligible. It is up to the applicant to determine if they are eligible based on how their institution determines tenure-track equivalency.
  - ii. Applicants who switched institutions but maintained a tenure-track position are eligible so long as the first appointment was June 3, 2015 or earlier.
- b. Have served as principal investigator on one or more major, competitive, research grants (for example, NSF, NASA, ERC, DFG, Wellcome Trust, Moore Foundation). The grants should be funded by an organization external to the applicant's institution.
  - i. The initiative requests applicants have been the principal lead or principal co-lead on at least one major research grant. Principal co-leads are eligible when all leads contribute equally to the project outcomes. Cases where the applicant has been a subawardee or contractor on an award are considered ineligible.
  - ii. Applicants who have received funding from organizations not listed above are eligible provided the applicant was the lead on the award. Please email [symbiosis@moore.org](mailto:symbiosis@moore.org) with specific questions on funding eligibility.

Current and previous Moore Foundation awardees are eligible to apply, although previous funding will not confer an advantage or disadvantage during the selection process. The opportunity is intended for individual investigators and is not open to teams or collaborative projects.

#### **Can teams apply for this funding opportunity?**

No. This opportunity is intended for individual investigators. Applications will be evaluated based on research underway in one investigator's laboratory. The initiative will not review applications from teams and/or multi-partner collaborations.

#### **Is there a limit on the number of applicants who may apply from one institution?**

No.

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### **What will you fund?**

We anticipate awards encompassing three central themes: origins and evolution, mechanisms of symbiotic interactions, and/or ecology and natural history. We are interested in symbioses where at least one partner is a microbe and where the symbiosis takes place in a marine or freshwater environment.

### **Which research fields will be supported by the investigator awards?**

The [Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative](#) seeks to support scientists who are conducting research in fields relevant to our aims of illuminating how aquatic symbioses involving microbes function and how these interactions shape ecology and evolution in marine and freshwater environments. We are looking to support a variety of scientists such as ecologists, physiologists (macro-algae, aquatic plant, and animal), modelers, theorists, evolutionary biologists, microbiologists, aquatic scientists, geoscientists, engineers, data scientists, chemists, biophysicists, visualization specialists, and microscopists, among others.

### **I'm an adjunct professor with my own research laboratory. Am I eligible?**

No. Applicants must hold a tenured or tenure-track position (or equivalent) that demonstrates institutional commitment. If you are uncertain whether the terms of your appointment meet this eligibility requirement, please e-mail [symbiosis@moore.org](mailto:symbiosis@moore.org) prior to submitting a pre-application and provide information about the terms of your position. We will consider your situation and respond as soon as possible.

### **My primary appointment and research space are at a government facility. Am I eligible?**

Yes. However, we require that applicants hold a position that is the most similar to tenure track available at that institution (i.e., equivalent in terms of institutional commitment). *Also see FAQ regarding indirect cost requirements for Moore Foundation grantees.* Temporary or term appointees and contractors are not eligible. If you are uncertain whether the terms of your appointment meet this eligibility requirement, please e-mail [symbiosis@moore.org](mailto:symbiosis@moore.org) prior to submitting a pre-application and provide information about the terms of your position. We will consider your situation and respond as soon as possible.

### **I'm not sure if I am eligible, since my primary institution does not have a tenure track. What should I do?**

For institutions that do not have a tenure track, we require that applicants have a position that is the most similar to tenure track available at their institution (i.e., equivalent in terms of institutional commitment to the employee, etc.). If you are uncertain whether the terms of your appointment meet this eligibility requirement, please e-mail [symbiosis@moore.org](mailto:symbiosis@moore.org) prior to submitting a pre-application and provide information about the terms of your position. We will consider your situation and respond as soon as possible.

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### **My only funding is as a co-principal investigator rather than a principal investigator. Am I eligible?**

For awards such as (e.g.) NSF, a co-principal investigator is considered eligible provided all project investigators are contributing equally to the work. Funding where the applicant is a subawardee or contractor is not considered eligible. Please email [symbiosis@moore.org](mailto:symbiosis@moore.org) with any questions about eligible research grants.

### **I am just a few months short of having four years of experience as a faculty member. Am I eligible?**

No. Eligibility is to be determined by the date when you first assumed a tenure-track or equivalent position relative to the pre-application date; to meet this requirement, you must have assumed an independent faculty position, or equivalent, no later than June 3, 2015.

### **Would you consider widening the eligibility requirements to accommodate early career scientists?**

We recognize the high quality of symbiosis-related research from early career scientists who are not eligible for this call. While this funding opportunity requires applicants have 4 or more years in a tenure-track (or equivalent position), we are planning additional funding opportunities, which may broaden eligibility requirements.

### **Am I eligible to apply to the 2019 Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems investigator competition if I already have a grant from the Moore Foundation?**

Yes. Current and previous grantees are eligible to apply to this competition; however, previous Moore Foundation funding does not provide any advantage or disadvantage during the review process.

*Please note:* If you have any past due grant requirements from a current or previous Moore Foundation award, you must complete these requirements prior to applying for your application to be considered.

#### Pre-application Components

### **When is my pre-application due?**

June 3, 2019 by 23:59 PDT.

### **What must my pre-application include?**

The intention of the pre-application is to provide foundation staff and reviewers an overview of your research background and interests and your lab's future directions. Candidates invited to submit a full application will have the opportunity to expand on the current research and future directions sections.

Your pre-application must include the following information:

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- **Contact Information:** Prefix, Name, Email, Phone Number, Organization, Position
- **Major Accomplishments:** Summarize your research achievements. Provide an example of how your research has influenced (or has the potential to influence) understanding of aquatic symbioses. *250 words maximum.*
- **Future Research:** Briefly outline your potential research direction(s) for the next five years, including how it/they would have a major impact toward advancing understanding of aquatic symbioses that include microbial associations. What are the risks? What are the payoffs if successful? *250 words maximum.*
- **Community Survey:** The [Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative](#) is interested in surveying applicants about best practices and current and future needs for conducting aquatic symbiosis research. We will use the information as part of a broader landscape analysis. Survey responses are required. However, they will not be used to evaluate your pre-application. We appreciate your thoughtfulness in responding to the questions and thank you for your time.
- **Current Research:** Describe how your current research has challenged or has the potential to challenge scientific paradigms relating to aquatic symbiosis and has taken intellectual risks, regardless of the outcome of any experiment. Explain how your research connects to one or more of the central scientific themes in the initiative: origins and evolution, mechanisms of symbiotic interactions, and/or ecology and natural history. Two pages maximum (plus up to one page that includes figure(s) that best represent your work and up to one additional page of references). For formatting, please use 11 pt. Times New Roman font on 8.5-11" paper with 1-inch margins. Uploaded documents that exceed the page limits will not be reviewed.
- **Biographical Sketch:** A maximum two-page bio-sketch consisting of sections on (1) contact information, (2) professional preparation, (3) appointments, (4) five most relevant papers or projects related directly or indirectly to aquatic symbiosis, (5) list of awards, (6) list of relevant active grants, and (7) list of collaborators. For formatting, please use 11 pt. Times New Roman font on 8.5-11" paper with 1-inch margins. Uploaded documents that exceed the page limits will not be reviewed.

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Upon completing the pre-application, applicants will be asked to complete an optional demographic survey. The [Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative](#) is interested in surveying the community for demographic information because we want to learn how we can improve attracting and supporting individuals from all identities and backgrounds. We also wish to inform ourselves how we can best serve the needs of our grantees and the grantee community. All questions on this survey are optional. The survey responses will be kept separately from the scientific materials and will not be shared with external reviewers. Responses will not be used to evaluate your pre-

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application. After each stage of the selection process has been decided, foundation staff will track the aggregate properties of the applicant pool. All responses will be kept in strict confidence. Please click [here](#) for the Apply privacy policy for data.

### **In the summary of my current research program, can I include work that is already supported by my grants?**

Yes. We are interested in the full range of the work you are doing, regardless of current sources of funding. Your two-page summary (plus up to one page that includes figure(s) that best represent your work and up to one additional page of references) should give a clear idea of how Moore Foundation support might influence your research plans.

### **Will I be evaluated based on the community survey questions?**

No. While the community survey is required, it is intended to give Moore Foundation staff an overview of research across all areas of aquatic symbiosis. We appreciate the additional time you put into answering those questions.

### **Will there be an investigator competition next year?**

No. At this time, the [Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative](#) does not anticipate holding another investigator competition.

### **Will the initiative have other funding opportunities in the future?**

Yes. We plan on announcing two additional funding opportunities, separate from our investigator funding call, later in 2019. The first will focus on advancing experimental model systems in aquatic symbiosis. The second, in partnership with the Simons Foundation, will be centered on the origin of the eukaryotic cell. These funding calls will provide the opportunity for teams to apply and will not be limited to single PI projects. There are not restrictions to the number of funding opportunities you may apply for, so long as you meet the requirements of the specific funding call. More information about these funding opportunities will be available later in 2019. Prospective applicants are reminded this is a nine-year initiative, and we anticipate additional funding opportunities in subsequent years, too.

### **Does the Moore Foundation require me to include endorsement or approval from my institution to apply for this funding opportunity?**

Not at the pre-application stage. Multiple researchers from the same institution may apply. If you are selected as a finalist, your institution's endorsement will be required for the grant to move forward.

## Review Process

### **How does the review process work?**

Foundation staff and external reviewers will evaluate the pre-application materials. Applicants will be notified of application status by August 1, 2019. A subset of applicants will then be invited to submit a full application, due September 16, 2019.

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Full applications will be evaluated by staff and external reviewers. Staff will determine next steps and notify finalists by November 15, 2019. Grants are expected to be awarded in early 2020.

### **Who are the reviewers?**

Reviewers include expert scientists selected by [Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative](#) staff.

### **Will you share reviews or provide feedback on the application?**

No. We are restricting any counsel or guidance to ensure we remain neutral and fair to all applicants. Feedback will not be shared during the application process or at the conclusion of the application process.

### **What is the policy for conflicts of interest?**

Rigorous reviews of applicants for the Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Investigator competition are crucial to the aims and success of the initiative. We seek to ensure the review and selection process for the competition are fair and impartial. We will not have reviewers evaluate a proposal if one or more of the following criteria apply:

1. The reviewer has been a mentor to or mentee of the applicant, for example as a graduate student, postdoctoral researcher or advisor.
2. The reviewer has had a significant collaboration with the applicant in the past 48 months, such as a jointly funded research project or a co-authored publication.
3. The reviewer is in the same department (or equivalent) as the applicant.
4. The reviewer is a family member or partner of the applicant.
5. The reviewer or foundation has determined the review cannot be impartial for reasons not listed above.

### **Can I get a list of potential reviewers who might be assigned to my application?**

No. We do not make public the roster of reviewers for this competition.

### **Are the contents of my application confidential?**

Yes. The Moore Foundation will treat all application materials, including ideas and descriptions of plans, as strictly confidential. External reviewers will also be required to maintain confidentiality on all materials.

### **How many investigators will be selected?**

We plan to support approximately 12 investigators.

### Budgets and Indirect Costs

#### **What are the expected durations and amounts of the awards?**

Investigator grants are for five years (non-renewable – 2020-2025). Awards will range from approximately \$200,000 to \$400,000 in direct costs per year.

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### **How much time will I be expected to dedicate to this award?**

We expect the [Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative](#) investigators to prioritize Moore Foundation funding. The PI should determine how much time is necessary to achieve project goals.

### **Can funds be used to buy out teaching obligations at my institution?**

No. The [Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative](#) does not support funds being used to buy out teaching time.

### **Are budgets required as part of the application process?**

No. Budget plans with a justification will be requested of applicants invited to submit a full application.

### **How does the Moore Foundation establish an investigator's budget?**

Our grants to investigators are set through discussions with staff and are subject to approval by the relevant Moore Foundation approval authorities.

### **Does the Moore Foundation pay indirect costs?**

We provide limited overhead costs, not to exceed 12.5% of allowable expenses. Indirect cost discussions will occur with finalists. All finalist institutions must agree to abide by the foundation's indirect cost policy: <https://www.moore.org/docs/default-source/Grantee-Resources/indirect-cost-policy.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

### **I am considering moving to a new institution after June 3, 2019 (the deadline for applying for this competition). If selected by the Moore Foundation in this competition, can I transfer my grant to the new institution?**

Yes, so long as you and your institution still meet the eligibility criteria (such as being appointed to a tenure-track or equivalent position) and have the infrastructure and other resources required to support your research.

### **What happens if I want to move to a new institution after the award begins?**

We will work with your current and new institutions to transfer the grant. Please note that moving to a new institution requires developing a new grant agreement between the Moore Foundation and the new institution as well as transferring funds between institutions, typically via the foundation.

### Other Grant Funding

### **Can I continue to receive grant funding from other sources if I become a [Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative](#) investigator?**

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Yes. You can continue to receive other grant funding. However, receiving other grants should not compromise your time commitment to the Moore Foundation-funded component of your research portfolio.

**I am currently reporting very close to 100% effort on my current grants. Would that be an issue?**

Yes. If you are successful in this competition, we would ask you and your institution to reexamine your commitments in concurrent discussions with us.

### Technical Support

**I submitted my final application to be considered, but now I've noticed errors in my final PDF.**

Once you have clicked the final "submit" button, your online application closes and is no longer editable by you. It is imperative that you carefully review your materials prior to submission. You will need to e-mail [symbiosis@moore.org](mailto:symbiosis@moore.org) with your concerns and reasons for having your application reopened; the decision to re-open an application is at the discretion of foundation staff.

### Additional Information on the [Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative](#)

**What are the initiative's funding strategies?**

1. Enable discovery through investment in technology and resources.
2. Support scientists and engineers with unrestricted funding to innovate and explore through investigator grants.
3. Back collaborations of multidisciplinary teams to reduce silos between scientific disciplines and communities.
4. Create a more diverse and integrated field by building community.

**How do you define aquatic systems?**

We define aquatic systems as bodies of water inclusive of *marine* and *freshwater* environments. Freshwater environments include lakes, (seasonal) ponds, rivers, streams, creeks, (hot) springs, and freshwater sediments. They also include the aquatic portion of swamps, bogs, and wetlands. Marine environments include oceans, estuaries, lagoons, the seabed and deep-sea sediments. Hypersaline lakes are also included.

**How do you define "microbe?"**

Microbes include archaea, bacteria, single-celled protists and single-celled fungi. We do not consider viruses microbes.

**What is the initiative's view of viruses in symbiosis?**

The roles of viruses in symbiotic associations that include microbes are of interest. We would favor research that considers viruses as mutualists or parasites or that explores how viruses may facilitate mutualism and parasitism between cellular organisms. However, we would not favor research that solely focuses on predator-prey dynamics between virus and host or the roles of viruses in pathogenicity and disease.

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### **Do you fund microbiome studies?**

We define microbiome as the full collection of all microbes and microbial genes in a community relative to an animate or inanimate reference point. Studies that solely catalogue the identity and functions of microbes and genes are outside of our funding purview.

### **Do you fund studies on organisms that spend part of their life in water?**

Yes, so long as the basis of the research question being asked has to do with symbiosis in the water.

### **What don't you fund?**

Studies centered on agriculture, aquaculture, aquaponics, the human microbiome, applied sciences, symbiosis in terrestrial systems (such as plants and soil), symbioses without a microbe, predator-prey relationships (e.g., microbes as food), and pathogen research are outside the scope of this funding opportunity.

### **Will you focus on applied areas of research, like saving coral reefs?**

No. Our focus for this initiative is on fundamental, basic research, rather than applied challenges or conservation efforts.

### **Does this initiative replace the Marine Microbiology Initiative?**

No. This is a new area of work for us. There are connections between the fields of study, and we hope to leverage the knowledge gained from our Marine Microbiology Initiative and build on it in studying symbioses in both marine and freshwater ecosystems.

### **How else can I apply for funding from the [Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative](#)?**

This is currently our only open call. We plan to announce two additional funding opportunities later in 2019 (see prior FAQ). We do not accept unsolicited proposals.