

## **FAQs for Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative model systems solicitation**

June 24, 2019

### Eligibility

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

*Please note eligibility requirements are different for each funding call. We encourage you to read the details below carefully before submitting a pre-application.*

To be eligible for this competition, applicants must be able to receive research grants. Both tenure-track and non-tenure track researchers at academic institutions are eligible to apply, as are scientists at non-profit or for-profit companies, provided all data, protocols, and methods generated from model systems projects are openly shared with the scientific community. Both U.S. and non-U.S. scientists are encouraged to apply.

This solicitation is open to researchers applying individually as well as teams. Teams can be assembled across labs at the same institution or multiple institutions. For team projects, the project lead should fill out a pre-application on behalf of their team. Individuals or teams invited to submit a full application will have the opportunity to alter their team composition prior to the full application submission deadline if needed or desired. We encourage pre-applications from multidisciplinary teams of researchers (either within individual labs or represented in team discussions) – i.e., including members who have experience in a model system separate from this opportunity (e.g., *E. coli*, yeast, *Drosophila*, mouse, or another advanced system) or who could bring a tool, technique, or new perspective to the project – whose collaborative effort will bring innovative approaches to this portfolio of grants.

Current and previous Moore Foundation awardees are eligible to apply, although previous funding will not confer an advantage or disadvantage during the selection process. Please email [symbiosis@moore.org](mailto:symbiosis@moore.org) with specific questions on funding eligibility.

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

No.

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

We anticipate awards forming a portfolio to develop methods to that will ultimately shed light on the function, ecology, and evolution of aquatic symbiosis. 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. We plan to use information collected during the pre-application phase to determine the structure of the portfolio.

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

Yes, as long as you can receive research grants on behalf of your institution.

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### **Can I be the lead on one project and a project member on a separate project?**

You may only serve as project lead on one project. If you are a project lead you may also serve as a co-investigator on one additional project.

### **Is there a limit to the # of projects I can be associated with?**

If you are a project lead, you may only serve on a maximum of 2 projects (one as lead, one as co-lead). Scientists serving only as a co-investigator may be connected with a maximum of 3 proposals (e.g., a scientist who can offer a unique tool or resource to assist multiple teams and increase collaborations among grantees).

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

Yes. *However, please see FAQ regarding indirect cost requirements for Moore Foundation grantees, as our indirect cost rate may be incompatible with your organization.* 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.

### **Am I eligible to apply for this opportunity if I already have a grant from the Moore Foundation?**

Yes. Current and previous grantees are eligible to apply to this solicitation; 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?**

August 8, 2019 by 23:59 PDT.

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

The intention of the pre-application is to provide foundation staff and reviewers with information about your model system of interest, your current views on aquatic symbiosis research, and areas of model system research of interest to you and other project team members, if applicable. Candidates invited to submit a full application for a prospective award will have the opportunity to expand on their project details.

In addition, the [Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative](#) team would like to better understand the needs of the research community in developing model systems in

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aquatic symbiosis. We are requesting responses to a model system survey available through [SurveyMonkey](#) from all scientists interested in these model systems.

- If your team is submitting a pre-application for funding, responses to this survey are required from the team's Principal Investigator (PI). The PI's responses should correspond to the team's project of interest and will be used in assessing the team's pre-application. Foundation staff will include your responses when sharing your pre-application materials with reviewers.
- If you are a co-investigator on an award application, you may fill out this survey separately and provide more general answers. These responses will not be connected to or used to evaluate your team's pre-application. However, they will be used to provide the foundation with an assessment on the state of model systems research – survey responses are appreciated.
- If you are not applying for this opportunity but would like to complete the survey to inform our initiative team, you may provide general answers to this survey.

Researchers applying individually should complete the following forms, uploads and surveys. For team efforts (i.e. a proposal lead with one or more co-submitters), the proposal lead must complete the forms and uploads on behalf of the team. This includes compiling biosketches and documents from all team members. However, for surveys, the responses should be entered only for the proposal lead.

Your pre-application must include the following information:

- **Contact Information:** Contact information for the team lead, including Prefix, Name, Email, Phone Number, Organization, and Position. Please note you will have the opportunity to upload biosketches for all team members.
- **Community Survey:** ONLY FOR PROPOSAL LEAD. The [Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative](#) is interested in surveying proposal leads 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 *unless* you previously completed this survey as part of another application to the Moore Foundation. Responses will *not* be used to evaluate your pre-application. We appreciate your thoughtfulness in responding to the questions and thank you for your time.
- **Pre-applicant information (1000 words maximum):**
  - a. A description of your aquatic symbiosis model system of interest, including taxonomic information, and its importance in ecology and evolution.
  - b. A description of the methods, tools, and resources you intend to develop during the project. Generic background information on specific tools is not required, although we would appreciate background information on unconventional or frontier methodologies.
  - c. A description of the methodological challenges hindering development of tools in your system and goals for a possible project.

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- d. Research team: please briefly explain how the expertise of you and your team members offers an appropriate blend of experience with model systems, tools, and perspective to be considered for an aquatic systems initiative award.
- **Figures:** Figures if needed helping to describe your model system of interest and goals for a possible project.
- **Symbiosis Model Systems Survey:** Your completed aquatic symbiosis model systems survey generated from your [SurveyMonkey](#) responses.
- **Biographical Sketch:** If you are applying for this funding opportunity, you will need to upload a bio-sketch for each project team member (maximum 2 pages per researcher) 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, and (6) 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 word/page limits will not be reviewed.

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-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.

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

If you are the Principal Investigator for your team and are providing answers to the survey as part of your pre-application, initiative staff and external reviewers will use the survey content in helping to evaluate your pre-application materials. If you are a co-Investigator and providing general answers to the survey separately, these responses will not be used for evaluative purposes.

### **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 a model systems solicitation next year?**

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At this time, the [Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems Initiative](#) does not anticipate holding a second model systems solicitation next year.

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

Yes. We plan on announcing at least one additional funding opportunities, separate from our earlier investigator funding call, on July 9, 2019. This call, in partnership with the Simons Foundation, will be centered on the origin of the eukaryotic cell. There are no restrictions to the number of funding opportunities you may apply for as long as you meet the requirements of the specific funding call. Prospective applicants are reminded this is a nine-year initiative, and we anticipate additional funding opportunities in subsequent years, as well.

### **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.

### **Can I submit the same (or similar) project idea as I did for the investigator pre-application?**

We encourage you to read the solicitation for this funding opportunity closely to ensure your pre-application is aligned with this model systems call. There are differences in the scope of each funding opportunity, including project duration, eligibility requirements, and suitable research areas.

## 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 mid-October 2019. A subset of applicants will then be invited to submit a full application. Full applications will be evaluated by staff and external reviewers. Staff will determine next steps and notify finalists in January 2020. Grants are expected to be awarded in early-mid 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?**

Reviewer comments will not be shared during the application process or at the conclusion of the application process, although foundation staff may share summarized feedback to finalists selected to receive awards if we determine it will help with project development.

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

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Rigorous reviews of applicants for the Symbiosis in Aquatic Systems model systems solicitation are important for the 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 receive 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 model systems awards will be provided?**

The number of awards selected for funding through this solicitation will be determined based on assessment of the pre-applications we receive and the number of full applications deemed appropriate for funding.

### Budgets and Indirect Costs

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

We anticipate making awards ranging from 1.5 – 3 years in duration. The duration of each prospective award will be discussed with each applicant. The amounts of the awards will be determined later in 2019.

#### **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 pre-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 the budget for an award?**

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Our budgets 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 August 8, 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, as long as you and your institution 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.

### 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,



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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 eukaryotes, 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.

### **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](#)?**



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As noted above, we have one additional funding opportunity upcoming in 2019 focused on the origin of the eukaryotic cell (see prior FAQ). We do not accept unsolicited proposals.