SAFMC DISCRETIONARY PROJECTS SELECTION AND FUNDING PROPOSAL

5/20/2020

Council staff have been involved in a variety of short-term special topic activities and research projects in the past, such as MyFishCount, working with graduate students, and for-hire outreach. Some of these have been supported by additional grant funds while others have involved Council core funding. Concerns were raised with how such discretionary projects are initiated and supported during the Staff Retreat in February 2019. After further discussion at the Council Leadership Retreat in January 2020, staff was directed to prepare this proposal to describe and document a process for determining projects to pursue, ensure projects address Council needs, and consider allotting some funding to support projects.

This proposal addresses reviewing and selecting projects, criteria to determine what types of projects are eligible, funding alternatives, and developing proposals for consideration. If approved, it will be added to the SAFMC Handbook as an appendix. Projects supported through this process are intended to address specific research needs within a relatively short period of 1-2 years and requiring only modest funding. Projects of longer duration can be considered, providing they address critical Council information needs. Existing projects should be phased-in to this process as they come up for renewal.

1) **Project Selection and Review**
   a) Review Committee Membership
      - Executive Director
      - Deputy Director for Science
      - Deputy Director for Management
      - SSC Liaison (Council Member)
   b) Review Process
      - Staff will submit brief proposals outlining the project. No more than three pages
      - The review committee will meet biannually via webinar to consider proposals and select projects to be supported
   c) Review Timing
      ii) Proposals will normally be reviewed in April and October
         - This timing is compatible with Council budget and research priorities development processes and allows the Review Committee to meet in person during regular SSC meeting times
      iii) Additional reviews can be scheduled if needed to address specific RFP timing limitations
      iv) Projects may start anytime after they are reviewed and accepted

2) **Funding Sources**
   a) Internal project funding
      i) Allot up to $25,000 of base Council funding annually to support selected projects
         - Council is not obligated to fund this program annually

- The actual amount available each year will be determined as part of the regular Council budget development process
- For multi-year projects, latter year funding is contingent on progress
- Council may wish to adjust the initial allotment to account for existing long-term projects

b) External funding sources will be encouraged whenever possible
- Limited external funding opportunities are available to Councils
- Staff is first encouraged to pursue external funding when possible
- Because all projects require staff time regardless of funding source, externally funded projects will be routed through the selection and review process
- Externally funded projects do not count toward the Council funding allotted for internally funded projects

3) **Project eligibility criteria**

a) Projects will address a specific and identified need, as:
- Identified in the current SAFMC Research and Monitoring Priorities document
- Identified as a SAFMC Citizen Science program priority
- Recently identified by the Council, to allow consideration of developing issues that may not be included in the current Research and Monitoring Priorities
- Identified in an FMP or stock assessment

b) Projects will be of short duration
- Project timelines should typically not exceed 2 years
- Projects exceeding 2 years are acceptable if staff is primarily filling a supporting or partnership role and Council funding is not required

c) Projects will not adversely impact project staff's core responsibilities
- Staff working on the project must be able to fulfill their other job responsibilities

4) **Project Proposals**

a) Projects submitted for internal project funding will address the following items and should not exceed 3 pages
- Research need to be addressed
- Project goals and objectives
- Participating staff and their roles
- Project Partners (if appropriate)
- Anticipated staff time burden
- Project timeline
- Project budget
- Expected deliverables
- Plan for reviewing findings

b) Pre-proposal
   - If staff is interested in a project, but concerned that it may not meet eligibility criteria, they are advised to first discuss their plans with their supervisor and the Deputy Director for Science
c) Projects submitted for outside or external funding will follow the submission guidelines of the funding source
   - Staff should also indicate, for purposes of this policy, how the project addresses SAFMC research needs and how staff time will be impacted
   - A brief proposal as described for internally funded projects may be submitted to request approval for a project idea before an external funding source is identified or open through an RFP. This will allow staff to ensure a project meets Council needs before devoting effort to producing a full submission for an RFP
d) Exclusions
   - This process will not apply to staff serving as a member of a graduate student committee or as a mentor to a student or young professional, unless Council funding is requested for the student project
   - This process will not apply to staff serving as a partner on a project that another organization manages and administers unless Council funding is requested
   - Staff should consult with their supervisor if they are unsure whether an activity falls under this policy