

Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute Research Grants Call for Proposals 2012/13

The Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute (ABMI) collects information throughout Alberta on a wide range of terrestrial biota (lichens, mosses, vascular plants, mites, birds, mammals), aquatic biota (vascular plants, aquatic invertebrates), terrestrial and aquatic habitats (soil, live and dead trees, shrubs, herbs, litter, water physiochemistry, water basin characteristics) and landscape elements. This information is analyzed to assess the current status of the species and habitats, change over time in these, and to highlight relationships between human land uses and biodiversity intactness. Continuous improvement in data collection, analyses and communication is a fundamental principle of the ABMI. To facilitate this continuous improvement ABMI has implemented the ABMI Research Grants program.

Anticipated funding for the fiscal year 2012/13 is \$100,000 (this is still under review).

Goals of ABMI Research Grants

Research proposals are evaluated based on the degree to which they meet one or more of the following two goals:

1. Facilitate continuous improvement of core ABMI activities including: data collection, data analyses, and reporting that integrates of information into management process. **To determine whether proposed research meets this goal, the researcher must contact Jim Schieck or Stan Boutin** (contact information below).
2. Use of ABMI data to conduct innovative research and analyses that result in peer-reviewed publications.

ABMI Grants to Graduate Students:

- Proposals must meet at least one of the above goals.
- Graduate student grants are \$10,000 per year.
- MSc students can apply for up to two consecutive years.
- PhD students can apply for up to three consecutive years.
- Postdoctoral students can apply for a single year only.
- Graduate student applications must be signed by their supervisor.
- Students applying in for continued project support (during the second or third year) will be assessed based on progress during the previous year and availability of ABMI funds.
- Students are encouraged to work closely with ABMI.
- In multi-year research projects, ABMI grants are only available for year(s) when actual work is being conducted that addresses ABMI goals.

ABMI Matching Grants:

- Proposals must be focused on improving core aspects of the ABMI (goal #1).
- A maximum of 30% of the direct funding for the project will be supplied by ABMI.
- A maximum of \$30,000 per year is awarded, for a maximum of three consecutive years.
- For multi-year projects, grants will be assessed yearly based on progress during the previous year and availability of ABMI funds.
- Researchers must supply proof of matching funding prior to receiving the ABMI grant.

Research Themes Identified for 2012/13

Note that to be eligible for ABMI Grants, the proposed research must meet one or both of the ABMI goals outlined above. Research themes identified below are areas where ABMI is presently active. These themes are used as secondary criteria during the adjudication process. Note that evaluation in relation to the research themes will not be considered unless the research first meets at least one of the goals.

1. *Species at Risk*

At present ABMI monitoring methods are inadequate for many uncommon species. To better evaluate status and change for species classified as “at risk”, “may-be-at-risk”, “data deficient” or “sensitive” by the Alberta provincial government monitoring methods need to be developed.

2. *Evaluating Ecological Patterns and Process in Alberta*

ABMI collects extensive information about many species, habitats, and human disturbances throughout Alberta. This rich source of information can be used to test a wide variety of ecological hypotheses, and to highlight ecological relationships. Of particular relevance to ABMI is testing associations between human disturbances and ecological/biodiversity condition.

3. *Quantifying Ecological Response to Human Disturbance in Agricultural Regions*

Due to the nature of ABMI sampling, few pristine areas are surveyed in parkland and moist grassland natural regions of Alberta. Additional sampling and research is required in these regions to quantify the full range of ecological response to human development.

4. *Climate Change*

Research is required to determine how ABMI information can be used to evaluate climate change in Alberta and help resource planners incorporate these changes into their management processes.

5. *Ecosystem Services*

Research is required to determine how ABMI information can be used to evaluate ecosystem services and help resource planners incorporate this information into management processes.

6. *Communication*

Biodiversity, by its very nature, involves many different biotic and habitat elements that interact with each other at a variety of spatial and temporal scales. Communicating these complex patterns is difficult. Research and development to facilitate effective communication biodiversity is required.

7. *Data Collection Methods*

A diverse suite of data collection methods have been implemented by the ABMI to monitor biodiversity. Research to validate/refine ABMI data collection methods is required as part of continuous improvement.

Application Process:

- ABMI has created an Application Form to facilitate effective evaluation of proposals.
- All submissions must use the ABMI Application Form.
- Applications must be received by ABMI (Pam Foster; pfoster@ualberta.ca) before the deadline.
- ABMI Science Directors manage the review/adjudication process, and notify successful applicants.
- A Work Plan (including deliverables and dates) that is acceptable to ABMI, is required from each of the selected proposals before the grant is finalized and funding is released.

Adjudication:

- Of primary consideration during adjudication is the degree to which the proposed research is aligned with ABMI goals:
 - Proposals focusing on ABMI research themes, but not aligned with at least one of the ABMI goals, will not be considered.
- Secondary considerations include:
 - Degree to which the research addresses current ABMI research themes.
 - The scientific quality of the research.
 - Does the proposal facilitate use of the results by managers?
 - Are the investigators qualified to do the research?
 - Is the proposal clear, concise and achievable?
 - Is the budget realistic?

Administration:

- Agreements/contracts for the research grants are managed by the ABMI.
- Successful applicants must develop a Work Plan that is acceptable to the ABMI prior to the grant being finalized.
- Grants are paid in full once the grant is finalized.
- Awards commence on a date that is mutually agreeable to the ABMI and the grantee.
- One of the ABMI Science Directors participates as an advisor for each grant.
- For multi-year proposals, successful delivery during the previous year is required for continuation.

All applicants are encouraged to consult with Dr. Jim Schieck or Dr. Stan Boutin prior to developing a proposal.

Dr. Jim Schieck, Ph: 780-632-8306, Email: jim.schieck@albertainnovates.ca

Dr. Stan Boutin, Ph: 780-492-1297, Email stan.boutin@ualberta.ca

******* Proposal deadline is 4:00 PM Friday February 24, 2012 *******

Submit completed proposal to pfoster@ualberta.ca