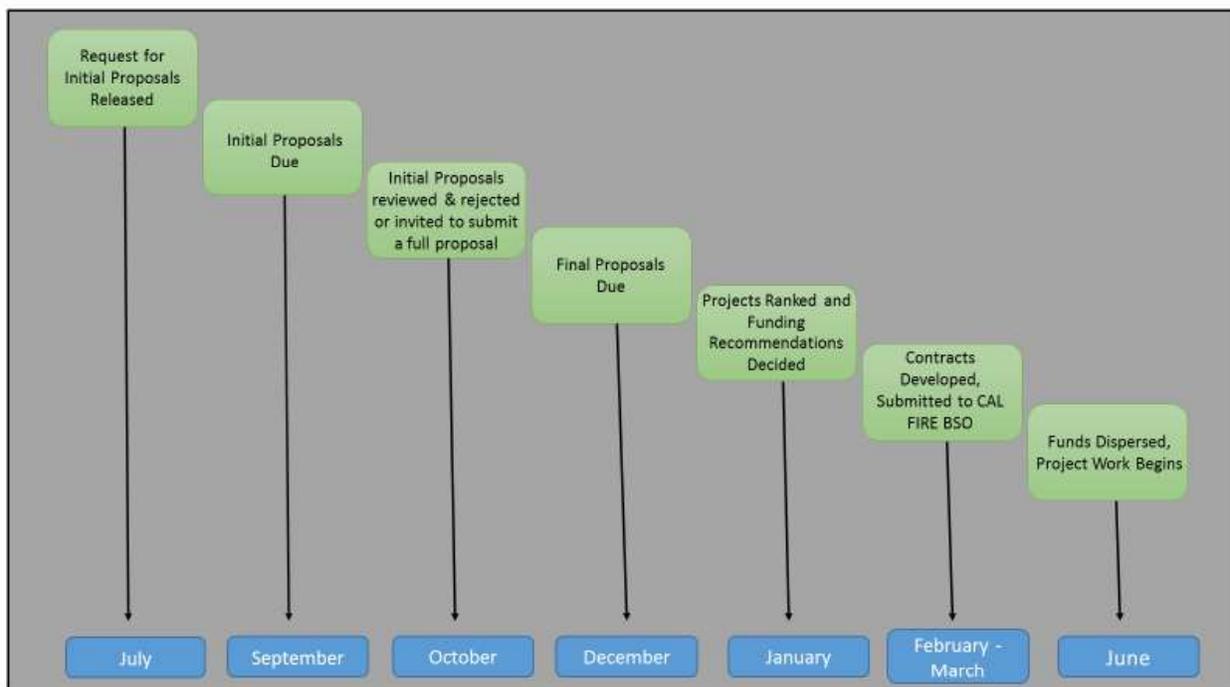


5.0 EMC Project Development and Management

Projects will be solicited through a once-a-year Request for Proposal (RFP) generated after the start of the fiscal year on July 1st. A RFP can be found on the EMC web site. Initial Concept Proposals will be solicited with a specified date and time by which submissions must be received by the Board. All proposals must be submitted on the standard form that the Committee has developed.

The EMC will conduct a preliminary technical review of all Initial Concept Proposals that are received by the due date (which is typically in September). This review will consider the completeness of the proposals and whether they are within the scope of the Themes and Critical Monitoring Questions elaborated in the Strategic Plan in Section 2.4. The EMC will work with Board staff to screen proposals for any conflicts of interest. The EMC may request the Principal Investigator to provide additional information within a reasonable period. When the EMC determines that an Initial Concept is complete and within scope, it will invite the Principal Investigator to submit a Full Project Proposal by a specified date (which is typically in December or January).

Figure 6. EMC Project Solicitation, Submission, Selection, and Funding Timeline.



Conflict of Interest

As an advisory committee under the oversight of the Board, members of the EMC may be perceived as quasi-public officials even though the committee lacks decision-making authority. As such, it is important that the members be aware of and avoid potential conflicts of interest, and even the possible perception of a conflict of interest. Generally, members must avoid participating in or influencing any decision in which they have a direct or indirect financial interest or other personal interest. The California conflict of interest rules that may apply to a particular member, or in a particular situation, can be very complex. If any questions or concerns arise regarding a potential conflict of interest, EMC members should seek guidance from the Board's legal counsel.

Project Ranking Method

The EMC will conduct thorough technical review of all Full Project Proposals that are received by the due date. This review will consider the completeness of the proposals and whether they are within the scope of the Themes and Critical Monitoring Questions elaborated in the Strategic Plan in Section 2.4. Principal Investigators will be invited to present and discuss their proposals at an EMC meeting. If needed, the EMC may request the Principal Investigator to provide additional information within a reasonable period. When a Full Project Proposal is deemed complete and ready for ranking, EMC members will rank the proposal according to the ranking process. EMC members will individually rank each project and the average ranking score will be calculated for each project. No specific minimum average ranking score is required for support; rather, individual project scores will be considered relative to other project scores.

Once all of the Full Project Proposals for the annual project cycle have been ranked, the EMC members will vote to make recommendations for allocation of available EMC funds to the Proposals, taking into consideration the project ranking score, how well the project tests the effectiveness of the FPRs, and the reasonableness of the requested budget. The EMC may decide to recommend funding a proposal in full, in part, or not at all. The Board will make the final funding decision.

It is the intent of the EMC to keep the ranking process transparent, with the ranking done in an easily trackable manner. The ranking will take place during regular, public meetings of the EMC. Subsequent to ranking actions, both written notes of the meeting and ranking results are published on the Board's website. Project Principal Investigators will be notified of their project ranking, and any comments regarding their project referred to them from the Committee. EMC members who are the Principal Investigator or Collaborator on a project will recuse themselves from ranking their proposal.

Ranking Category Summaries

Critical Question

Projects that address multiple EMC critical themes and multiple critical questions within a given theme will be ranked higher than those that only address a single theme and critical question. Additionally, projects must describe appropriate study design and methods to adequately address the proposed critical question(s), and approximate time frame to conclude results that may be used by the Board to use an evidence-based approach in rule revision(s).

Scientific Uncertainty

Projects will be ranked higher when our current scientific understanding of forest practice effectiveness in the FPRs and associated regulations is incomplete. A goal is to promote projects that address large gaps in the knowledge of the effectiveness of the FPRs and associated statutes and regulations. Projects should propose to investigate high priority critical monitoring themes (Strategic Plan Section 2.4).

Geographic Application

Proposed projects that have broad application throughout California forestlands both public and private will be ranked higher than those with application limited to a specific geomorphic region or sub-region. Projects need not be physically located throughout California to produce findings that apply to multiple areas in the state.

Collaboration & Feasibility

Projects will receive higher ranking when they have a broad array of collaborative partners involved with substantive expertise in the proposed study. This is to encourage multidisciplinary approaches in the proposals. Project proponents are encouraged to collaborate with state and federal agencies, universities, private industry, NGOs, watershed groups, etc. Past performance in delivering timely, acceptable monitoring reports within available budgets will be considered.

EMC Funding Request

We report the amount of EMC funding requested for information; it is not a ranking criterion. The proposed monitoring projects need to describe existing collaboration and funding that will ensure achieving goals and objectives of monitoring. Also, the proposals need to clearly state funding requested from the EMC. Project proponents shall provide the information on the requested funding in proportion to the total project budget.

RANKING OF PROPOSED EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING PROJECTS²

Project Number	Project Title	Critical Question	Scientific Uncertainty	Geographic Application	Collaboration & Feasibility	Overall Ranking	EMC Funding Request (not included in ranking score)
Example: EMC-15-001							

Ranking Method for Monitoring Projects

Critical Question: Proposed monitoring project addresses one or more EMC critical monitoring questions with appropriate study design and experimental methods.

Scientific Uncertainty: Current scientific understanding is not well-studied or validated. This ranking is weighed twice (2 times) the weight of other rankings.

Geographic Application: Critical question and proposed project has broad geographic application.

Collaboration & Feasibility: Number of active contributing collaborators relative to the monitoring subject. Consider the magnitude and expertise of the collaborators.
Feasibility of monitoring project to meet stated goals and objectives within expected budget and timelines needed by the EMC, Board or stakeholders.

On a categorical scale of 1 to 5, reviewers should refer to the following guidance when reviewing any category:

- 1 = Does not meet any portion of the Ranking
- 2 = Does not meet key portions of the Ranking
- 3 = May meet some portions of the Ranking, either key or ancillary
- 4 = Meets key portions of the Ranking and does not address ancillary portions
- 5 = Meets all portions of the Ranking

² The metrics used for ranking EMC projects were modeled on the Cooperative, Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Committee (CEMR) (established by the State of Washington Forest Practices Board) general method for ranking projects. This was deemed prudent during the initial formation of the EMC as CEMR is roughly similar in scope and mission as the EMC, and is a well respected governmental advisory committee. (<https://www.dnr.wa.gov/about/boards-and-councils/forest-practices-board/cooperative-monitoring-evaluation-and-research>).

Project Management

Board, agency and EMC staff will work closely with Principal Investigators to manage the current and ongoing project workload. Staff will report out on progress at each EMC meeting. Co-chairs will brief the Board during EMC updates as needed.

Contract Development and Administration

Contracts will be developed by Board staff under the guidance of the CAL FIRE contracting staff. It is critical that project selection be completed as early as possible in the fiscal year to ensure that contract deadlines can be met and funds encumbered in the appropriate fiscal year.

Status and Progress Reports

Principal Investigators will provide yearly updates on status and progress. In person reports may be requested by the EMC at committee meetings.

EMC Scientific Reports

Members of the EMC or principal investigators conducting monitoring will synthesize the results into final reports for the EMC. The reports shall include descriptions of purpose and need, scientific methods, results and technical analysis, evaluation of implications for resources and forest management operations, and disclosure of any possible limitations of results and any scientific uncertainty. The reports shall not provide policy or regulatory recommendations, other than ideas for potential further refinement of study methods to address any significant limitations and remaining scientific uncertainty. All final reports will be made available to the public on the EMC webpage.

All reports shall discuss the statistical, physical and biological relevance of the monitoring and results. Due to relatively small sample sizes and lack of controls for both dependent and independent variables associated with “specific question” studies, statistically rigorous testing of water quality, aquatic habitat and wildlife resource questions is often difficult. However, well developed resource monitoring questions can improve scientific monitoring designs so that they limit spurious results and enhance the range of inference. Both statistical and biological relevance of the monitoring and the resulting acceptable level of scientific uncertainty should be clearly stated in each monitoring proposal and final report.

Development of possible rule language options based on results and findings of EMC reports, if necessary, shall be proposed by or brought before the Board’s Forest Practice Committee (FPC) for review and comment prior to submittal to the full Board.