
Preparing a Statement of Need (SON) for consideration under one of the Civil Works R&D programs – FAQs

What is the purpose of the SONs?

SONs inform the Research Area Review Groups (RARGs) of the need for research to address a deficit in technical, policy or procedural guidance or practice relevant to execution of the USACE missions. The RARGs are composed of representatives from Divisions, Districts, and Centers of Expertise with additional representatives from USACE Institutes, research entities and Headquarters. SONs are reviewed and prioritized by the RARGs to ensure best use of limited R&D dollars, and thus inform research providing Field Practitioners with critically needed tools, models and guidance, based on state-of-the-art science & technology.

Who can submit a SON?

Any USACE Division or District employee who identifies a need for research to more effectively accomplish the Agency's Civil Works (CW) mission, can submit a SON.

How do I submit a SON?

SON's for the Civil Works business lines -Navigation (NAV), Flood Risk Management (FRM) and Environment (ENV) - are submitted, online, to the appropriate program via the Civil Works Gateway – which can be accessed at the following link:

<https://cw-environment.erdcdren.mil/cwenv.cfm>

Direct program links are:

Navigation (NAV)

- <https://operations.erdcdren.mil/ideas/index.cfm?CoP=nav>

Flood Risk Management (FRM)

- <https://operations.erdcdren.mil/ideas/index.cfm?CoP=Flood>

Environment (ENV)

- <https://cw-environment.erdcdren.mil/needs.cfm?CoP=Env>

What information do I need to provide?

The Gateway links the submitter to an online form, containing the following fields:

1. Submitters name
2. e-mail address
3. Title
4. Need that drives requirement (what you need to more effectively meet organizational challenges)

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5. Extent of need across USACE
 6. Requirement (aspects of need that R&D should address)
 7. Consequences if requirement not met (quantify if possible - e.g. value to Corps and Nation of the proposed R&D - to facilitate research prioritization)
 8. Product recommendation (best way/form to deliver results to you – reports, models, software, training, etc.)
 9. Requirement identification
 10. Requirement development

A clear statement of the problem and need, current or projected impacts to mission execution, and anticipated benefits are especially important to include in the SON, in order to ensure that the need for the research is adequately communicated and appropriately prioritized. Additional information that is helpful to the RARG and to the researchers includes the timeline in which a product is needed, and the manner in which product will be used, and by whom (i.e. quick, screening level, alternatives comparisons vs. data intensive project design; simplified modeling by field personnel versus detailed modeling by expert modelers).

What if I need help developing a SON?

If you have difficulty with the online submittal process, or would like additional technical or policy input prior to submitting your statement of need (perhaps pertaining to what other work is/has been done in a specific area, what is technically feasible, or in translating an operational problem into a research concept), there are a number of individuals who can offer guidance and/or refer you to appropriate technical experts for more direct help in preparing the SON submittal. These points of contact include Community of Practice (CoP) representatives, the Planning Centers of Expertise (PCX), the Technical Directors (TDs), Associate Technical Directors (ATDs) and the Program Managers (PMs). Principle Investigators (PIs) involved with other research in the program can also be a valuable information resource, however, PIs cannot submit SONs, and their role should be supportive rather than lead-taking.

Specific points of contact for the above resources are provided at the end of this document.

How often are SON's submitted and when are they due?

SON's can be submitted online at any time – and this is strongly encouraged – however, to be assured of consideration in the current FY cycle, SONs typically need to be in the system by December 31. The principal purpose of imposing a cutoff date is to provide sufficient time for review by the Communities of Practice (CoPs) prior to the RARG. Thus, exceptions for later submissions are sometimes made – particularly if there is an urgent need - otherwise, SON's received too late for consideration in the current FY cycle, will be retained for presentation and consideration in the next FY.

What happens after my SON is submitted?

SON's received by the applicable deadline are evaluated and ranked at the next RARG meeting (typically spring/early summer timeframe, annually), and funded (subject to ranking and funding availability) in the subsequent FY. SON's received after the deadline will be retained, but may not be evaluated/ranked until the subsequent FY, and funded (if selected) in the FY after that.

What if my SON is considered but not selected?

All SON's are archived for future consideration. Normally, previously considered SON's are reconsidered in each of the following 2 or 3 years subsequent to submission; older SONs may also be reconsidered at some future date if there is a compelling need.

Who are my POCs?

NAV Business Line

- Business Line Manager – Jeff McKee
- TD – Jeff Lillicrop
- ATD – Eddie Wiggins
- PCX Leads
 - Deep Draft Navigation - Todd Nettles
 - Inland Navigation - Beth Cade

FRM Business Line

- Business Line Manager - Mark Roupas
- TD – Julie Rosati, Acting
- ATD – Cary Talbot
- PCX Leads
 - Flood Risk Management - Eric Thaut
 - Coastal Storm Risk Management - Larry Cocchieri

ENV Business Line

- Business Line Manager - Mindy Simmons
- TD - Al Cofrancesco
- EMRRP PM – Trudy Estes
- PCX Leads
 - Ecosystem Restoration - Greg Miller

CoPs

- Economics – Dave Moser IWR
- Plan Formulation – Maria Wegner HQ
- Environmental – Jeff Trulick HQ

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- Cultural Resources – Paul Rubenstein HQ

Program portfolios

- ERDC researchers (PI's) can be a very good supporting resource regarding past and current research efforts, expected level of effort or execution timelines for a proposed research effort, and technical feasibility. PI's with technical background that is in alignment with a proposed SON can be identified by browsing relevant ERDC publications, program research portfolios or presentations, or by contacting any of the above specified individuals for recommendations. TDs and ATDs/PMs are generally most closely connected to the ongoing research and the PI's doing the work in a given program, while CoP representatives may have a somewhat broader view of work being done across multiple regions and programs. Vetting a concept at multiple levels can be a valuable first step in developing a SON that will have broad applicability and utility throughout the Corps, but is not a requirement.