



2nd Open Call for Research
Proposals

2013-2014



I. General Information on MEOPAR

Established in 2012, the Marine Environmental Observation Prediction and Response Network of Centres of Excellence (MEOPAR) is building partnerships and a team of Canadian researchers to address critical issues related to human activity in the marine environment, and the impact of marine hazards on human activities in coastal regions.

MEOPAR's vision is to inspire and enable Canadian leadership in marine environmental observation, prediction and response. MEOPAR delivers knowledge, technology, and people to enable Canada's communities and industry to enhance resilience and economic opportunity through an informed relationship with the changing marine environment.

MEOPAR's seven goals, through which it delivers on its vision are:

An operational network: Promote an operational network for marine observation, prediction and response along Canada's coastline through a cooperative approach linking government agencies, academia, municipalities, non-governmental organizations and ocean-related industries.

Information and knowledge exchange: Improve sharing of information and knowledge between communities, private and public sectors, non-governmental organizations, academia and government in order to improve response capability and resilience in the face of changing patterns of risk in the marine environment.

Northern hazard assessment: Provide scientific information and evaluation of marine hazards to guide economic and community development in Canada's northern marine environment.

Private-sector participation: Strengthen Canadian private-sector expertise in marine environmental observation, prediction and response and promote this expertise to address national and international problems

International cooperation: Promote international cooperation in marine environmental observation and prediction, including adoption and leverage of international best practices and expertise for the benefit of Canadians.

Fundamental research: Enhance resilience through development of new understanding of marine hazards and associated vulnerabilities, and improved ability to predict and project risk.

Economic opportunity: Create economic opportunity through enhancement of resilience as well as through commercialization and application of new approaches to marine observation and prediction.

The MEOPAR Network works closely with government agencies, industry and international partners to develop new mechanisms for the sharing of expertise, data, infrastructure, and approaches relevant to anticipating and responding effectively to marine emergencies. With a projected lifetime of up to 15 years MEOPAR will have fundamental impacts on Canada's preparedness in the face of marine hazards.

MEOPAR's research program presently comprises 7 projects including three proposed and funded via the 1st Open Call for Proposals, which was held in 2012-2013. All projects are organized under two research themes:

Theme 1 has a focus on improving the ability of government and private sector to respond to existing and emerging marine hazards on time scales of hours to seasons.

Theme 2 aims to develop and test techniques aimed at improving the ability of government, the private sector, and coastal communities to anticipate, prepare and adapt to developing marine risks on time scales of seasons to a century.

The Network is supported by a Prediction Core and an Observation Core. These provide crosscutting technical and scientific support across the projects.

MEOPAR's 2nd Open Call for Research Proposals is intended to broaden participation in the Network and allow MEOPAR to address its strategic research objectives.

II. Open Call for Proposals 2013-2014

A. Project Duration and Funding Levels

For the Open Call for Proposals 2013-2014, MEOPAR envisions a potential allocation of up to \$4,000,000 to support projects over the period Summer 2014 through Spring 2017. Two types of projects will be considered: a) multi-year, integrated projects covering the entire funding period; or b) smaller-scale projects of up to eighteen month's duration.

The shorter duration projects could be used to tackle a specific research topic (including exploratory research) or a synthesis activity that can be addressed within that timeframe. The longer duration projects, while initially funded for 3 years, would have an opportunity to propose follow-on activities, based on successful progress and project review by MEOPAR, to allow for a maximum potential project duration of 5 years. Such a timeline is contingent upon the successful renewal of funding for the MEOPAR

network beyond its initial 2017 end date. Note that all MEOPAR projects are subject to yearly reporting and review requirements.

B. Project Areas and Topics

MEOPAR seeks to encourage a wide variety of project topics related to its research mandate. MEOPAR will consider Letters of Intent for projects that will help MEOPAR achieve its goals as previously stated in Section I. MEOPAR has been actively consulting with stakeholders across Canada and these consultations indicate a particular need for research that leads toward the following outcomes:

- *Improved management and communication of marine environmental data and risk to end-users and the public;*
- *Reduction of the impacts of maritime commerce, such as short-sea shipping, on marine ecosystems;*
- *Reduction of risk associated with major coastal industrial developments (harbor facilities, mining and processing operations, shipbuilding, aquaculture, etc.);*
- *Development of observation and prediction systems for safe, efficient operations and emergency response for deepwater oil and gas operations; development of standards for offshore operations in harsh environments;*
- *Development, optimization and integration of novel observing technologies (robotic systems, power supply, data transmission, etc.) of relevance to marine risk and hazards;*
- *Improved ocean literacy (e.g., through education and training concerning marine safety, risks and hazards);*
- *Improved governance (planning, policy, decision-making and regulatory frameworks) related to ocean observation, marine transportation, oil and gas development, coastal zone management, coastal community infrastructure, safety and survival, and emergency response.*
- *Improved coordination, communication, data sharing and resource mobilization among Canadian governmental and non-governmental entities and their international partners to expedite social and economic recovery from a significant maritime commerce emergency.*

While all project proposals will be evaluated equally (according to criteria specified in Section E, below), proposals that address these stakeholder-identified needs are especially encouraged.

C. Structure of Project Teams and Eligibility

In keeping with the nature of the Network of Centres of Excellence program, MEOPAR seeks to build multisectoral and interdisciplinary partnerships. **Hence MEOPAR projects should involve researchers from different disciplines (natural sciences, social sciences and health sciences) and involve multiple sectors (e.g. academia, private sector, government, NGOs) working together.** The expected degree of interdisciplinary participation will be greater for the longer duration projects. Applicants are encouraged to build on existing initiatives and projects, including current MEOPAR projects, where appropriate, and include international participation when relevant.

All researchers and organizations which intend to receive MEOPAR funding must meet the general eligibility conditions of at least one of the three federal granting councils: NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR.

MEOPAR is especially interested in supporting research that has clear evidence of end-user involvement in the identification of the research topic to be addressed and the formulation, support and conduct of the research itself. Possible “end-users” could include, but are not limited to: the marine transportation industry, professional fish harvesters, offshore oil and gas operators, coastal communities, environmental organizations, government departments and agencies with an ocean-focused mandate, ocean technology companies, and others.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek support from and integrate external partners (in-kind and/or cash support) for their projects. Applicants are also encouraged to consider and explore alignment of their proposed research activities with current MEOPAR projects as well as the ongoing and proposed research of MEOPAR’s government partners (see www.meopar.ca).

Investigators who intend to receive MEOPAR funding are limited to involvement in a maximum of two Letters of Intent.

D. Procedure

Applicants considering submission of a project application should first consult MEOPAR’s Strategic Plan and Research Plan, both of which are available online at www.meopar.ca.

Applicants should then submit a Letter of Intent package to MEOPAR. The Project Description should be a maximum of three pages long, single-spaced (no more than 6 lines per inch), regular 12-point font, with margins of 0.75” all around.

The Project Description section must include the following:

- Problem(s) to be addressed, including overview of the state-of-the-art;
- Specific contributions to MEOPAR’s Vision and connection to MEOPAR’s Goals;
- Outline of research approach and desired outcomes;
- Social/policy issues to be addressed;
- End-user involvement and external partnerships;
- Timeline;
- Longer-term perspectives (i.e. beyond lifetime of the project, if any);
- Approximate budget (by year) according to following table:

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Totals
Personnel				
Materials, Supplies, Dissemination				
Travel				
Equipment				
Totals				
<i>Partner funds expected</i>				
<i>MEOPAR funds requested</i>				

While an approximate budget is sufficient for the Letter of Intent phase, a more detailed budget with specific breakdowns in each category will be expected for full proposals. Similarly, while details about other partners and/or external funding sources should be included, separate letters of support need not be included in the Letter of Intent package.

One additional page can be used to define the composition and qualifications of the proposed Research Team. References, if included, can be provided on one additional separate page. Therefore, the total Letter of Intent package must consist of no more than five (5) pages in total (three pages for Project Description, one page for Research Team and one page for References). Pages should be numbered and there should be a header including the name of lead Project Investigator and the Project Title. Letters of Intent that do not follow these requirements will not be considered further.

The application deadline for Letters of Intent is 3:00 pm Atlantic Daylight Time, January 10, 2014. Applications must be submitted electronically in PDF format to admin@meopar.ca.

E. Evaluation

Letters of Intent will be reviewed and assessed by MEOPAR's Research Management Committee (RMC). The evaluation of the Letters of Intent and recommendations for the solicitation of full proposals will be forwarded to MEOPAR's Board of Directors. Requests for full proposals will be issued in February 2014 and full proposals will be due in April 2014, with funding decisions expected by June 2014. Depending upon the subject matter, some projects may be sent for external review as part of this process. Financial awards should be in place by the summer of 2014, contingent on signing of Network Agreements. The full timeline is included below:

Call for Proposals 2013-2014 Timeline	
Call for Proposals Released	October 30, 2013
Letters of Intent Due	January 10, 2014
Review of Letters of Intent	January - February 2014
Request for Full Proposals	February 28, 2014
Full Proposals Due	April 25, 2014
RMC & External Review	May – June 2014
Recommendations to Board	June 2014

The criteria for the review of the Letters of Intent will be:

1	Alignment with MEOPAR Objectives
1.1	MEOPAR Strategic Goals
	<i>The proposed project must link strongly and convincingly to one or more of MEOPAR's goals as listed in Section 1.</i>
1.2	End-User Involvement
	<i>End-users must be involved closely in the proposed research plan and were involved in project/question formulation</i>
2	Excellence and Interdisciplinary Balance of the Research Team
2.1	Eligibility
	<i>The PI must be eligible to receive funds.</i>
2.2	Interdisciplinary Balance
	<i>The team must include strong and convincing integration of natural and social sciences.</i>
2.3	Quality of the Research Team
	<i>The team must be of exceptional quality with no obvious deficiencies.</i>
2.4	International Participation
	<i>The team may include convincing international participation with clear relevance/utility to Canada</i>
3	Multi-sectoral Structure and Support
3.1	Involvement of Multiple Sectors
	<i>The project should involve an exceptional degree of multisectoral partnership (government, business, academia, NGO's etc.).</i>
3.2	Builds on Existing Initiatives
	<i>The project should propose convincing integration with, and extension of, existing Canadian initiatives, particularly existing MEOPAR projects.</i>
3.3	Leverage
	<i>There should be significant and quantifiable cash and/or in-kind contributions from external sources.</i>
4	Merit of the Proposal
4.1	Innovation / Originality
	<i>The proposed project must be highly innovative and/or original and has the potential to produce significant advances.</i>
4.2	Project Feasibility

	<i>The proposed objectives and milestones and methodologies must be clear and realistic.</i>
5	Training of Highly Qualified People (HQP)
5.1	Participation of HQP
	<i>The proposed project must have extensive involvement and well-defined responsibilities for the integration of HQP.</i>
5.2	Training Strategy
	<i>There is a clear and innovative plan for training of the HQP. Non-academic partners should be involved in the training.</i>

More detailed criteria for the full proposals will be provided to the successful applicants from the Letter of Intent phase.

Questions about MEOPAR's Open Call can be referred to:

Mr. Neil Gall

Executive Director, MEOPAR
1355 Oxford Street, Suite 2-41
Halifax, NS, B3H 4J1
(t) 902.494.4386
(e) neil.gall@meopar.ca