



MEOPAR

Partnership Plan

September 2013



**Networks of Centres
of Excellence**
**Réseaux de centres
d'excellence**

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Goals of the Partnership Plan

MEOPAR's fundamental objective is to improve observations and predictions of the marine environment in order to reduce economic losses, societal hardships and environmental degradation caused by a wide range of hazards including severe winter storms and hurricanes, storm surges, oil spills, and intrusions of oxygen depleted waters in biologically productive areas. Thus the practical utility of MEOPAR project outputs depends on the effective alignment of the research thrusts with the short-term and long-term needs of a wide range of sectors of society.

Developing and sustaining strong partnerships with industry, all levels of government, non-governmental organizations (NGO), community groups, associations, and other research networks, enhances MEOPAR's ability to:

- Identify additional existing and emerging marine risks to best guide research priorities;
- Incorporate stakeholders' needs and perspectives into the design and development of data collection systems, ocean models, and risk assessment methods;
- Develop and sustain multi-disciplinary research groups that span academic and non-academic collaborators for more robust analyses and integrated solutions;
- Transfer research results to applications and operations, and ultimately maximize benefits to multiple sectors;
- Transfer technology to industry for commercialization and broader application of the results of MEOPAR's research projects;
- Expand the research intensity and scope through partner cash and in-kind leverage.

Principles and Benefits of the Partnership Plan

The Partnership Plan for activities and funding is guided by the following principles:

- Ensuring consistency with MEOPAR's strategic goals (see MEOPAR's Strategic Plan);
- Encouraging pan-Canadian involvement in the MEOPAR Network;
- Reinforcing multidisciplinary perspectives and multisectoral involvement;
- Achieving world-leading concentration on designated topics of high relevance through the concerted effort of Canadian and International experts;
- Promoting two-way interactions between MEOPAR investigators and industrial

partners: the Network's research will provide new predictions, capabilities and insights which can enhance partners' technological developments and commercialization opportunities; the partners, in turn, can participate in the Network's activities by contributing technical expertise, resources, and market guidance, and facilitating exploitation of results;

- Enhancing the benefits of MEOPAR's research for Canadian Partners within the country and worldwide through heightened knowledge mobilization and expanded technology exploitation;
- Strengthening the sustainability of the Network through added resources and greater integration of academic researchers and partner organizations, during the tenure of NCE funding and beyond.

Specific Partnership Opportunities

While MEOPAR's aim is to cultivate a wide range of partners and transfer research results and technology for the maximum benefit of Canadian industry, government and end-users (including individuals, communities, NGOs, etc.), the following opportunities were highlighted in the MEOPAR network proposal as examples of partnership development consistent with the Network's goals and themes:

- The improved basis for observation, prediction and risk assessment to be developed under MEOPAR Theme 1 projects will be conducted in close partnership with government agencies at federal, provincial and municipal levels and will strengthen the scientific basis for policy implementation, including environmental impact assessments.
- By closely integrating the observing and modelling components of the fixed system, it will be possible to transform observations into useful products (e.g., short term forecasts of physical and biogeochemical conditions within a harbour or strait for use by port authorities, marine shipping companies, municipalities). One reason for doing this is the expectation that the users of the products will respond by supporting the long term operation of a network of self-sustaining, pan-Canadian, coastal observing systems that will expand with each new deployment. The commercialization of these integrated systems will provide a way of ensuring the long term sustainability of the observing component of these fixed systems. If the systems can be maintained for more than five years, the resulting time series of observations will become useful in terms for detecting change in the coastal environment and testing the downscaling models developed under Theme 2 projects.
- A promising target area is partnership development to commercialize prediction algorithms. The Network will facilitate linkages with the appropriate software industry players to develop a commercial package for these markets.

Mechanisms for Engagement

Partners can participate in MEOPAR activities in diverse ways. This section describes some key types of involvement, but other forms of engagement will be considered as opportunities arise.

- **Partnering on projects:** This is the foremost partnership arrangement. In some cases, it may involve active participation in the research by partner organization investigators. It can also include in-kind contributions from the partner through equipment donation, equipment use, data provision, or sharing of facilities. In many instances, the partnership is effectuated through cash contributions by the partner. The minimum required level of partner funding may be unrestricted for projects initiated through Open Calls for Proposals, while MEOPAR Partnership Program projects require partner cash and in-kind contributions to meet or exceed MEOPAR funding. Some partnerships may have the explicit aim of transferring technology derived through MEOPAR research to industry for commercialization.

- **Workshops:** A workshop involving academic researchers and non-academic partners provides an excellent opportunity for diverse groups to:
 - Exchange views on outcomes and directions of MEOPAR Research projects, with the aim of improving the alignment between Network capabilities and activities with the needs of user groups;
 - Generate ideas on new and potentially fruitful areas for MEOPAR to explore in future Calls for Proposals;
 - Initiate sharing agreements for data or equipment between academic and non-academic institutions;
 - Develop partnerships with the view of preparing proposals for MEOPAR funding;
 - Explore partnerships for improved knowledge mobilization and commercialization of research outcomes;
 - Engender new collaborations to enable MEOPAR to strengthen linkages across multiple industries and all sectors of society.

Workshops will be supported in two ways:

- MEOPAR will host joint events with other Networks, Associations or Industry Groups on topics of mutual interest;

- MEOPAR will provide funding to support workshops initiated by network researchers that fall outside the purview of individual projects, and serve one or more the purposes outlined above. The process is described in the section on the Partnership Funding Program.
- **Participation in events/workshops:** Partners can engage with MEOPAR by supporting MEOPAR events through providing sponsorship, logistic support, or participating in event activities such as speaking at or facilitating a meeting.
- **Expert Fora:** MEOPAR will support Expert Fora to bring policy makers together with Canadian and International researchers. Each forum will comprise a three to five day intensive workshop to address policy-relevant issues, followed by a one-day policy outreach event. The topics will usually address a MEOPAR-relevant issue of topical concern, but could also be of a more “brainstorming” nature aimed at assessment of the marine hazards, risks and emergencies of the future.

The Expert Fora will provide an opportunity for intense exchange of ideas and perspectives between researchers on selected topics of high relevance to MEOPAR’s public and private sector partners. However they will also be used for communication of findings directly with policy makers and other interested parties. International participation in the Fora will be an important mechanism of knowledge exchange between Network Investigators and their international colleagues, as well as between researchers and MEOPAR’s partners, including policy makers, planners, industry representatives. A suggested format for an Expert Forum is to follow the highly successful Dahlem Workshop mode developed at the Freie Universität Berlin. The MEOPAR Expert Fora will have a maximum of 25 workshop participants divided into several working groups. Not more than 50% of the participants will be MEOPAR Network Investigators and the remainder will be invited national and international participants of very high standing in their fields. Background papers will be written by MEOPAR investigators and/or the invited participants in advance of the workshop and will be critiqued and revised during the Workshop. Revised papers together with the reports of the working group discussions will be published on-line as an open-access publication for maximum availability and impact. The subsequent outreach event/symposium will be advertised widely and will be located and structured to encourage attendance and participation by its target audience.

Partnership Funding Program

MEOPAR has budgeted \$1,815,000 for the Partnership Program during its first 5-year funding cycle. These funds will be used to support activities that initiate, strengthen, and maintain partnerships between academia and non-academic sectors, including end-users and technology developers. More specifically, \$300,000 are allocated to fund expert fora, \$120,000 will serve to support workshops and networking events, while the remaining \$1,395,000 will fund joint academic-partner project proposals.

1. Workshops/events:

- A MEOPAR Network Researcher or Group may apply once during this NCE cycle for funds to support a workshop or networking event aimed at engaging non-academic partners for at least one of the purposes outlined above;
- A maximum of \$15,000 of MEOPAR funding may be applied for;
- The event must involve at least one organization that is not currently partnered with MEOPAR, nor in any other project involving the applicant;
- Events which have contributions (cash or in kind) from one or more participating organizations will be rated more favourably;
- Funds may be used for event related expenses, such as advertising, logistic support, room rental, non-alcoholic meals and snacks, and travel for specified types of participants (ex. invited speakers) as outlined in the Call for Proposals;
- A final report on the outcome of the workshop/event must be prepared and submitted to MEOPAR within one month of the event.

2. Expert fora:

- A MEOPAR Network Researcher or Group may apply once during this NCE cycle for funds to support an Expert Forum;
- A maximum of \$60,000 of MEOPAR funding may be applied for;
- Fora which are co-sponsored by one or more participating organizations, such as the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR), will be rated more favourably;
- Funds may be used for event related expenses, such as advertising, logistic support, room rental, non-alcoholic meals and snacks, and travel for participants;
- The proceedings of the policy papers must be prepared and submitted to MEOPAR within three months of the event.

3. Partnership projects:

- Applications may be made by eligible researchers from eligible academic institutions, in collaboration with one or more non-academic partners, for project funds from MEOPAR's Partnership Program.
- Proposals will be accepted on a continual basis.
- The total funding envelope available in any given fiscal year will not exceed \$750,000 (except in the final year of MEOPAR's funding cycle, wherein all remaining funds are available) to ensure a reasonable distribution of the funds over the funding cycle.
- The partner must contribute to the direct project costs in an amount equal to, or greater than, the amount requested from MEOPAR. The partner cash must be at least half of the MEOPAR request, with the balance provided as in-kind contributions to the project by the industrial partner(s). MEOPAR will recognize only those in-kind contributions that are fully documented and considered essential to carry out the work, in a manner consistent with NSERC Guidelines.
- Projects may be for one, two or three years' duration.
- An application must be for no less than \$20,000 of NCE funding, and no more than \$200,000. This will ensure projects of sufficient scope to produce meaningful results, and yet not so large as to unduly preclude other partnership applications.
- The budget must clearly align with the need to produce results consistent with the research plan developed with the partner(s). This may mean that sufficient funds are allocated to support Postdoctoral Fellows and Research Associates, as well as direct research support costs such as equipment, materials, and field work travel.
- Projects that involve joint work between academia and the partner(s), and/or are focused on commercialization of MEOPAR research will require an Intellectual Property (IP) agreement prior to the release of funds.
- Annual progress reports, as well as a final report, are required.

Management of Intellectual Property and Sharing of Data

The ownership of intellectual property (IP) supported by the Network shall be determined by law, NCE policies, and the policies of the relevant participating institutions. It shall be agreed that the authority and responsibility for making decisions with regard to the legal protection and commercialization of IP shall rest with the owners of the IP and/or their institutions. If there are two or more owners of the IP, they shall

designate an agent to act on their behalf. In all cases the Network shall be granted a license to use any resulting IP for research and science purposes for participating member institutions.

Partnership Program Administration

Applications to the Partnership Program Fund will be pre-screened by the MEOPAR Scientific Director, Associate Scientific Director, and Executive Director, for general suitability, relevance to the Strategic Plan and adherence to requirements. A set of guidelines will be created for this purpose. Unacceptable submission will be returned to the proponents with feedback on the deficiencies.

Applications for **workshops/events** which pass the pre-screening will be reviewed by a committee composed of the Associate Scientific Director, the Executive Director, and one non-academic member of the RMC. The committee's recommendations will be made to the MEOPAR Board of Directors within a month of receiving the application.

Applications for **Expert Fora** which pass the pre-screening will be reviewed by the same panel as above, with opportunity for written comments and suggestions from the full RMC membership. External reviewers will be solicited when needed. The committee's recommendations will be made to the MEOPAR Board of Directors within one month of receiving the application.

There will be three deadlines per year (one per academic term) for applications for **Partnership Project** funding. Those which pass the pre-screening will be reviewed by a sub-committee of no fewer than five members of the RMC, including the Associate Scientific Director, who will act as Chair. Two subcommittee members will be non-academics. External reviewers will be solicited when needed. RMC recommendations will be made to the MEOPAR Board of Directors within two months of receiving the application.

At its discretion, the Board may delegate approval of Partnership Program projects to its Executive Committee.