Halifax, NS: This week, the Marine Environment Observation, Prediction and Response Network (**MEOPAR**) is launching the second cruise season for its Modular Ocean Research Infrastructure (**MORI**) initial development and demonstration project, transforming non-specialized vessels into complex ocean research vessels. Thanks to the MORI project, this year, two scientific research cruises will have access to the ship time they need at a time when that access is dwindling.

"What's exciting is that 12 months ago, MORI was simply a vision. It was just an idea of what could be. Last year we started to turn that vision into a reality with our first cruise season, and we learned a lot of lessons. Now we're using those lessons learned in the second season, moving further along that path of turning that original vision into a reality," said Dan Gibson, MEOPAR Project Manager for MORI.

MORI is a creative solution for enabling ocean researchers to go to sea while Canada is losing access to research ship time, with the retirement of the Canadian Coast Guard's Hudson earlier this year. Thanks to MORI's flexible, modular approach to outfitting vessels with research capabilities, it holds major potential to transform how ocean research is conducted in Canada. It also opens up new opportunities for the Canadian marine industry.

Mobilization to change the industry vessel **Atlantic Condor** of Atlantic Towing Ltd. into a research vessel will begin on Friday, June 22, 2022, with the first cruise slated to depart late next week. The cruise is part of the Fog and Turbulence Interactions in the Marine Atmosphere (**FATIMA**) project and will set sail for the waters east of Sable Island and then up to Newfoundland. The project involves scientists from several US universities, funded by US Office of Naval Research, along with Canadian researchers from Environment and Climate Change Canada and Dalhousie University. The second cruise will be led by scientists from Dalhousie University and five other Canadian Universities, with support from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, researching deep-water coral, sponge, and seep habitats along the Northwest Atlantic shelf and slope. That cruise is set to begin in early August.
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About the Modular Ocean Research Infrastructure (MORI) project: MORI is an alternative pathway for vessel-based ocean research which makes use of a modular system of containerized, interoperable laboratories and research infrastructure that can be used in various combinations on a range of non-specialized vessels. This model is potentially more flexible, economical, scalable and can be delivered faster than the construction or purchase of a new fleet of specialized research vessels. The infrastructure will also be ready for use on new, low-carbon vessels of the near future.

MORI's Initial Development and Demonstration (IDD) phase is supported by Irving Shipbuilding Inc. with $2 million in funding as part of the company's Industrial and Technical Benefits commitment under the National Shipbuilding Strategy. MEOPAR has committed a $1 million contribution to research cruise support. The project also has support from COVE Ocean – Centre for Ocean

Ventures & Entrepreneurship, where the Atlantic Condor transformation is occurring, as well as from the National Research Council, Natural Resources Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Defence Research and Development Canada, and Hawboldt Industries.

About the Marine Environment Observation, Prediction and Response Network (MEOPAR): MEOPAR is a national Network of Centres of Excellence linking top marine researchers and highly qualified personnel across Canada with partner organizations and communities. MEOPAR funds leading-edge research, facilitates collaborative research and helps to train the next generation of marine professionals.