

COMMUNIQUÉ

MARINE NATIONAL FACILITY STEERING COMMITTEE

MEETING #72: 28 February-1 March 2013

The period since the last Marine National Facility (MNF) Steering Committee Communique has been a busy one preparing for the last voyages on *Southern Surveyor* and the arrival of *Investigator*. The transition process is a complex process and it is very encouraging to see the cooperation and the support provided by so many people from CSIRO and other organisations in the marine community.

RV *Investigator*

The new vessel is taking shape quickly. For those following the construction on *Investigator's* blog it has been a fascinating journey in the world of ship construction. The blog can be found at <http://csiofrvblog.com/>.



New scientific equipment for *Investigator*

Under the Future Research Vessel Project, the large task of purchasing of new equipment for *Investigator* is proceeding well. As equipment lists become finalised, they will be made available on the MNF website.

CSIRO is also supporting equipment purchases for the Facility through its capital expenditure program and has contributed an additional \$200,000 for this purpose in 2012-13. In the past, these funds have been used to support the *Southern Surveyor's* suite of scientific equipment and more recently priority has been given to items that can be transferred to the *Investigator*. In 2012-13, CSIRO capital expenditure funds will be used to purchase the following items:

- acoustic modem for creating an acoustic data link between deployed equipment and the vessel,
- Fleet Broadband satellite communications system as a backup for *Investigator's* primary satellite communications system,
- replacement rock dredges,
- portable pressure generator for testing pressure transducers on instruments such as CTDs, EZ net, undulating towed bodies and GP depth sensors,
- oceanographic sensor suite to measure temperature, conductivity, pressure, dissolved oxygen, fluorescence and turbidity for use on various subsea towed instruments, and
- an underway Sea Surface Temperature (SST) radiometer for measuring heat exchange between the ocean and the atmosphere and for satellite calibration to provide sustained SST observations for the Southern Hemisphere.

Health, Safety and Environment

Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) is a major focus of the MNF Steering Committee and CSIRO, with HSE performance reviewed at each meeting and action taken as required.

With the introduction of *Investigator*, there has also been a major focus on reviewing all safety aspects of the future operation. This work will continue and be refined throughout the commissioning year in parallel with the development of the vessel's International Safety Management (ISM) system.

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Extended *Southern Surveyor* schedule

Southern Surveyor's schedule has been extended from March to September 2013. The extension was brought about by the ongoing requirement to service deep sea moorings following the announcement of a delay in the arrival of the *Investigator*. New transit voyages created by the extended schedule will be allocated through a call for applications for Next Wave and Transit Voyage Science which closed on 11 March 2013.

Following *Southern Surveyor's* final voyages, planning is underway to sell the vessel in late 2013.

The transition from *Southern Surveyor* to *Investigator* has raised a number of challenges. MNF seeks to minimise disruption to the science program as much as possible within the build project and imponderables associated with commissioning of a new vessel. The patience and flexibility of the science community through this period has been greatly appreciated.

2014-15 Supplementary applications for sea time

Applicants will soon be advised the outcomes of the primary call for sea time on *Investigator* in 2014-15. In mid-March, there will be a call for Supplementary applications to fill unused capacity on research and transit voyages in the primary schedule. The Supplementary process is particularly suited to the underway collection and analysis of samples and data given that on-station time is limited by primary voyage requirements.

Supplementary application opportunities will be of interest to a wide range of people including researchers, student groups, training groups and those testing new equipment and processes at sea. The Supplementary call is also suited to researchers seeking to obtain pilot data to provide proof of concept to underpin future primary voyage applications.

The call for supplementary applications will open in April 2013 on the MNF website.

2015-16 Applications for sea time

The call for primary applications for sea time on *Investigator* for 2015-16 is expected to open early in July 2013. Information will be available on the MNF website closer to the date.

Policy update

Policies for *Investigator* are being updated and will soon be posted on the MNF website. Most changes are refinements of existing policies and reflect the new operating model necessary to optimise use of *Investigator*, however all applicants should ensure they check the policies prior to applying for sea time.

Online training and support

Providing high quality support for voyage participants is very important and the MNF is beginning the process of upgrading its internet services to assist in this matter. Part of this upgrade will include online training for voyage participants and their onboard managers to help prepare for future voyages.

Prof Craig Johnson

Chairman

Marine National Facility Steering Committee