

COMMUNIQUÉ

MARINE NATIONAL FACILITY STEERING COMMITTEE

MEETING #80: Wednesday, 22 February 2017

The 80th Marine National Facility Steering Committee (MNFSC) meeting was held in Hobart on 22 February. The MNFSC discussed a number of strategic issues and reviewed schedule options for single year applications for 2018-19. An overview of these discussions is provided below.



Aerial view of RV *Investigator* in front of ice berg during voyage IN2017_V01 to Totten Glacier. Image: Marine National Facility.

Assessment process

MNFSC acknowledged the success of the first sitting of the National Benefit Assessment Panel (NBAP), tasked with assessing applications for Granted Voyages in parallel to the Science Advisory Committee (SAC). MNFSC identified the expertise brought to bear by the expert panel in the field of National Benefit, and the assistance their insight provides to MNFSC when considering scheduling options for *Investigator*. MNFSC acknowledged the important contributions of the SAC and NBAP to the success of the MNF.

Applications for MNF Granted Voyages

The MNFSC endorsed changes made by the MNF to the applications process, based on feedback provided by the NBAP and SAC. These changes provide greater clarification to applicants and will better inform the assessment process.

Changes incorporate the inclusion of a copy of the MNF Granted Voyage Agreement with application forms so that applicants can ensure that their sponsoring institution is willing and able to contract to the obligations associated with an offer of sea time on the facility. We have also added guidance notes for some of the more complex application questions, to provide greater clarity for applicants on the information required.

Granted Voyage pre-proposal process

The Pre-proposal process was introduced in 2012 with the aim of providing a mechanism to encourage proponents to collaborate with other researchers to provide an opportunity to consider science synergies towards an enhanced application.

Feedback from users of the Facility highlighted that the time provided could be lengthened to enable greater opportunity for meaningful engagement between proponents. This feedback was supported by the MNFSC, and the deadline for submission of Pre-proposals will now be brought forward to give more time between their submission and the deadline for receipt of final applications.

A timetable for the 2019-20 single year application process will be communicated via the MNF Blog and subscriber list shortly. If you are not currently on the subscriber list, subscribe [here](#).



MNF scheduling 2018-19

On Monday, 13 June 2016 the MNF issued a call for applications for single year Granted Voyage applications in 2018-19.

NBAP and SAC convened in Hobart on 15 and 16-17 November respectively to assess the 17 Granted Voyage applications received. Time applied for across the 17 applications equated to approximately 544 days at sea. When multi-year applications, submitted in prior calls were also added, there were a total of 23 applications with 700 days at sea requested in 2018-19 for the available 180 days.

As reported previously, SAC assessed science excellence and track record, and NBAP assessed contribution to National Benefit.

Following SAC and NBAP scoring, applications were then considered by the MNF in the context of operational, geographical and temporal constraints to develop a recommendation to MNFSC for a primary Granted Voyage schedule for 2018-19.

MNFSC approved the proposed 2018-19 primary Granted Voyage schedule which will be published on the MNF website after offers of sea time are accepted by applicants. The Supplementary applications process for 2018-19 will commence shortly thereafter.

MNF 2015-16 Annual Report

The Marine National Facility Annual Report for 2015-16 was approved by MNFSC and is now available for download from the [MNF website](#).

Full year operations

As with previous years, the demand for sea time on *Investigator* far outweighs the days available, with ~390% over subscription for Granted Voyages in 2018-19. Working towards achieving full year operations for the *Investigator* remains the highest priority for MNFSC.



SOTS mooring array being prepared for deployment during IN2016_V02. Image: Gloria Salgado Gisbert.

Membership

MNFSC#80 saw the following changes to its membership:

- Mr Gary Prosser (Deputy CEO, AMSA) takes the role of Government representative.
- Mr Tim Moltmann (Chair of National Marine Science Committee) resumed his ex-officio role as Chair of NMSC. Mr John Gunn previously acted in this position as Mr Moltmann's delegate.
- Dr David Williams (Executive Director DNFC-CSIRO) assumed his ex-officio role as Executive Director, CSIRO Digital National Facilities and Collections. Ms Toni Moate previously acted in this position as Dr Williams' delegate.
- Ms Toni Moate will now attend the MNFSC in the formal role of MNF Director.

The MNF and MNFSC would like to sincerely thank the following outgoing MNFSC members for their considerable contribution to the Marine National Facility:

- Mr John Gunn who represented the Chair of the National Marine Science Committee (NMSC)
- Ms Toni Moate who represented the Executive Director, CSIRO Digital National Facilities and Collections.

In conclusion

The continued demand and support for *Investigator*, once again demonstrated by the consistently high number of applications, and the diversity and quality of applications for sea time, is very encouraging.



Group photo on *Investigator* in front of ice berg during voyage IN2017_V01 to Totten Glacier 2017. Image: Doug Thost.

The MNFSC is committed to supporting continuous improvement opportunities, to ensure maximum efficiency and benefit is leveraged from the Marine National Facility. This will also ensure we stay relevant with the marine research community going forward.

Dr Ian Poiner
Chair, MNF Steering Committee