



# Marine National Facility National Benefit Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Version 3.1 January 2024

## 1. Purpose

Established by the Marine National Facility Steering Committee (MNF SC), the National Benefit Advisory Committee (NBAC) provides advice to the MNF SC on the Research Benefit of research proposals under the Merit Assessment Process and any other matters requiring expertise as needed.

## 2. Membership

The number and composition of members on the NBAC is determined by the MNF SC and can change from time to time. The NBAC comprises of:

- a Chair selected by the Steering Committee and that meets the criteria in Section 4 and
- no fewer than four ordinary members and that meet the criteria in Section 4.

The Committee would generally not comprise more than eight ordinary members.

The Committee will seek to include Early Career Researchers (ECR) as detailed in Section 6 and in addition to the members above.

The Chair MNF SC, Director MNF and MNF Facilities Program Director are not members of the NBAC but may attend meetings as observers.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities specified by MNF SC for the NBAC are:

- following the Merit Assessment Process approved by the MNF SC, assess and score the Research Benefit of proposals and in doing so, consider responses generated from the rejoinder process
- make recommendations to the MNF SC on the assessed proposals and any other matters that

may impact decisions on the voyage schedule

- provide advice to MNF SC on the conduct of the applications and assessment process and its effectiveness
- declare any real or perceived conflict of interest at the outset of any NBAC meeting for management in accordance with the MNF Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality Policy
- at all times, strictly maintain confidentiality for all aspects of NBAC business as outlined in the MNF Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality Policy.

Observers and Early Career Researchers may contribute to the assessment discussions, but their scores will not be factored in the final assessment score.

## 4. Nominations

The following criteria are used to select people for invitation as members:

- experience in an Australian organisation that is recognised as a key end-user of data and research products generated through access to the MNF capabilities
- have a sound knowledge of Australian marine policy/management priorities and research needs.

MNF SC seeks to ensure the membership reflects a diversity of domains and sectors, age, gender, cultural background, and regional representation (including international) and these considerations inform appointment of members.

In addition to the membership criteria outlined above, the NBAC Chair must also meet three additional criteria for appointment:

- not be an employee of CSIRO
- have experience in both marine research and marine policy
- have prior experience in chairing committees.

The Steering Committee might select a Chair from within the NBAC membership if the criteria above are met.

All members of the NBAC are invited as experts and not as representatives of any end-user, employer or research agency.

## 5. Substitute Member

In the case one or more members cannot participate in an assessment round, the NBAC Chair, in consultation with the MNF SC Chair, may seek a substitute for the meeting if it is felt that a member's absence will compromise the ability to make a robust, informed and objective assessment.

## 6. Early Career Researcher

To assist with the development of the next generation of Australian marine scientists, the MNF SC will seek to appoint up to two Early Career Researchers (ECR) as NBAC members to attend meetings and contribute to discussions. While ECRs will be asked to score proposals, their scores will not contribute to the final assessment.

To be eligible for appointment, an ECR candidate should ideally have less than 10 years' experience since PhD confirmation and currently be funded in an Australian postdoctoral position such as a Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA) or Ocean Sciences (OCE) Postdoctoral fellow or equivalent.

Appointed ECRs will be allocated a mentor from within the NBAC membership.

## 7. Terms of Appointment

Members will be invited by the MNF SC to join the NBAC - and have their term extended or ended - by an exchange of letters. Committee members can resign by letter to the Chair of the MNF SC. Initial appointment of members to the NBAC will be for a term of up to three years, with the option of re-appointment for an additional term at the discretion of the MNF SC. Wherever possible, the replacement of NBAC members should be phased to maintain core knowledge and experience of Committee processes within the NBAC.

## 8. Sitting Fees

NBAC members including ECRs and those formally appointed to observer roles may be entitled to be paid sitting fees for meetings and work outside normal meetings. Payment will be in accordance with the CSIRO Pay and Benefits determination on committee fees for non-CSIRO members.

## 9. Meetings

Meetings of the NBAC will be called by the MNF Secretariat.

The NBAC will meet at least once per application cycle while additional meetings and out of session consultation may also be required, for example out of session assessment of supplementary applications for sea time.

Face to face meetings will generally be held in Hobart with all travel costs to be covered by the Marine National Facility.

In the absence of the NBAC Chair, the MNF SC Chair will be asked to nominate a Chair, otherwise the members present will nominate a member to chair the meeting.

## 10. Secretariat

Secretariat services for the NBAC will be provided by MNF.

Version	Date Approved	Comments	Approval/ Review
1.0	April 2016		MNF Steering Committee
2.0	December 2019	Amended to implement Committee name change and remove membership of RAC Chair	MNF Steering Committee
2.1	December 2020	Review amendments to expand governance arrangements and align with MNF 2023	MNF Director
2.2	January 2021	Amended following feedback during OOS Process	
3.0	January 2021	Approved Out of Session (Decision # 392)	MNF Steering Committee
3.1	January 2024	Transposed onto updated MNF letterhead	