

## **NERC Moorings Policy**

NERC wants to provide the best and most efficient service from the National Marine Equipment Pool (NMEP) for its users. In order to do this NERC needs to ensure that the equipment is put to best use and not used in circumstances which put it at significant risk of loss or damage, accepting there will always be some risk whenever equipment is deployed at sea. NERC mooring operations are currently estimated to be in the region of £20m. The following policy has therefore been put in place:

1. National Marine Facilities (NMF) must be consulted before any scientific proposal is submitted that may require moorings technical support or NMEP equipment from NMF due to the current high level of demand.
2. Definition of types of mooring activity
  - Short term: A mooring activity that will be completed during a cruise e.g. where a mooring is deployed at the start of the cruise and then recovered at the end of the cruise.
  - Medium term: A mooring activity that will be completed after a mooring has been deployed for an extended period e.g. where a mooring is deployed during one cruise and then recovered approximately 12-months later during another cruise.
  - Long term: A mooring activity that is (or is intended to be) part of a long-term time series. e.g. The RAPID and Porcupine Abyssal Plain observing systems.
3. Deployment and retrieval protocols
  - Any science proposal that will require mooring technical support from NMF must be discussed with NMF before it is submitted.
  - Standard marine planning prioritisation will be applied to mooring support (i.e. in priority order: 1. NERC funded science; 2. Non-NERC funded (including Europe /USA) science that is within NERC's remit; 3. Commissioned research to do science that's within NERC's remit).
  - A deployment and retrieval plan must be agreed with NERC Marine Planning and NMF before a mooring will be deployed.
  - Where a mooring will require maintenance over its lifetime, between initial deployment and final retrieval, a strategy must be developed in association with NERC Marine Planning and NMF to service these needs.
4. Access to mooring equipment and instrumentation according to type of mooring activity
  - Short term: Equipment within the NMEP is available for use dependant on risk, and a capital depreciation cost will be applied to the NMF superstructure charges. Capital for equipment outside of the NMEP will need to be found from the funding source e.g. requested within a NERC grant proposal.
  - Medium term: Access to equipment within the NMEP is on a negotiated basis with NMF, dependant on availability and risk. Contingency funds in case of loss may be required for some items otherwise a capital depreciation cost will be applied to the NMF superstructure charges. Capital for other equipment must be found from the funding source e.g. requested within a NERC grant proposal.
  - Long term: Science programmes are expected to cover all of the capital costs associated with long-term moorings. Access to NMEP equipment is on an opportunistic basis only and it will only be provided for a limited time period (i.e. for one deployment). Before

NMEP equipment is deployed the science programme must be able to demonstrate that it has sufficient capital to cover any NMEP capital losses.

5. Risk Management

- Before a mooring is deployed a risk management form must be completed by the Principal Scientist (PS) in conjunction with NMF. The mooring must be developed within the context of the Mooring Design best practice document.
- NMF must be informed if there are significant changes to the information provided in the risk management form between the time of submission and when the mooring activities are carried out.
- For mooring activities involving NMEP equipment or equipment funded by NERC, agreement on the level of risk must be reached with the Head of NMF.