

# “MEIF@USM” Procedures for Selecting Strategic Investments

Effective September 16, 2016

## A. GOAL OF MEIF@USM

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The goal of *MEIF@USM* is to strengthen USM’s research and workforce development capacities in strategic areas that are responsive to the needs of businesses and industries in the seven MEIF Sectors and their support ecosystems. This will be accomplished by seeding strategic initiatives that bring together multidisciplinary groups of faculty, staff, students, and external partners that coalesce around sustainable, productive, and innovative applied research and/or workforce development solutions that span the K-to-Workforce Continuum. All investments must align with the *MEIF@USM* Strategic Framework.

## B. TYPES OF INVESTMENTS

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### 1. STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS

- *MEIF@USM* invests in strategic initiatives that achieve four interrelated outcomes:
  - Address challenges/problems identified by businesses and industries in one or more of the following seven MEIF Sectors and their support ecosystems.
    - biotechnology
    - aquaculture and marine technology
    - composite materials technology
    - environmental technology
    - advanced technologies for forestry and agriculture
    - information technology
    - precision manufacturing technology
  - Support multidisciplinary groups of faculty, staff, students, and external partners that coalesce around innovative solutions that are responsive to the identified challenges and problems.
  - Achieve one or more outcomes in the *MEIF@USM* Strategic Framework.
  - Demonstrate good faith effort in leveraging external support at a 1:5 ratio (\$1 MEIF to \$5 external) during the award period. External support includes, but is not limited to, grants and contracts, training fees, and fee-for-services.
- Investments will range from \$200,000 to \$400,000 per year and up to 3 years in length. Funds can support all budget line items.
- Additional MEIF funding beyond the third year will be considered as a new proposal.

### 2. OTHER INVESTMENTS

Considered on a case-by-case basis and dependent on availability of MEIF funds, *MEIF@USM* supports:

- Internship programs and the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP).
- Graduate research assistantships and requests for small research equipment.
- Course release to lay the groundwork for the submission of successful proposals for extramural funding from federal, foundations, or other research sponsors.
- Requests for matching funds required in proposals for extramural funding.

*MEIF@USM* does not support independent projects unless the project becomes part of a larger multidisciplinary strategic initiative that addresses documented community needs, can build University capacity, contributes to the state's economic development, and aligns with the *MEIF@USM* Strategic Framework.

## **C. SELECTING NEW STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR INVESTMENTS**

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### **1. CONSENSUS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR INVESTMENT**

- To the extent MEIF funds are available, *MEIF@USM* will request the Deans of all colleges to identify and collectively agree to recommend up to three strategic initiatives that would benefit the institution if supported. The expectation is that the Deans will solicit ideas from their departments and faculty.
- Each identified initiative must have a lead faculty/staff and must be accompanied by a brief summary of the initiative that includes the following:
  - a. Brief description of documented need of one or more MEIF sectors, including supporting ecosystems, which the initiative will address.
  - b. Explanation of how the initiative aligns with one or more of the outcomes in the *MEIF@USM* Strategic Framework.
  - c. Brief description of the initiative's outcomes, an implementation strategy, and a timeline for achieving the outcomes. This description may include the hiring of new strategic personnel that have abilities to elevate the initiatives in significant ways. MEIF support for strategic hires is restricted to research faculty and professional staff.
  - d. Rough order of magnitude estimate of potential cost.

### **2. INITIAL USM ADMINISTRATION APPROVAL**

- The Research Office will present to the USM leadership a summary of each potential initiative, potential for new personnel requirements and related institutional commitments, and its recommendation.
- The USM Leadership Team will select one initiative to move forward to the development phase of a full proposal.
- The USM Leadership Team will identify internal issues and procedures that need to be addressed/followed during proposal development.

### **3. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Research Office will:

- Provide guidance to the lead faculty/staff member in developing the proposal.
- Ensure that there is input from both internal and external stakeholders and that issues/procedures identified by USM Leadership are addressed/followed.
- Ensure University requirements related to use of human subjects, handling of hazardous waste, and treatment of animals are addressed.
- Notify USM Leadership about potential future University commitments to continue new strategic hires with E&G and/or Advancement funds.

#### **4. EXTERNAL REVIEW OF PROPOSALS**

- The Research Office will establish an ad hoc External Review Panel to review each proposal.
- The primary criteria for review are:
  - a. Extent to which the proposal addresses documented needs of one or more MEIF sectors and their supporting ecosystems.
  - b. Extent to which the involvement of external partners from one or more MEIF sectors and their support ecosystems is mutual and collaborative.
  - c. Extent to which the applied research and/or workforce development outcomes and associated activities are well defined and, if accomplished, would be responsive to the stated needs of the identified sectors.
  - d. Likelihood of the Project Team sustaining success.
- Members of the Panel will come from the various USM Advisory Boards, including but not limited to: the Economic and Cultural Development Forum; USM Board of Visitors; Muskie Board of Visitors; USM Foundation Board of Directors; and USM Corporate Partners.
- The outcomes of the review process will inform the Research Office of three potential directions:
  - a. Require revision to proposal to address the comments of the Panel, or
  - b. Decline further consideration for funding the proposal, or
  - c. Approve to move ahead for final review by USM Leadership.

#### **5. FINAL IMPLEMENTATION APPROVAL FROM ADMINISTRATION**

- USM Leadership will review the final proposal with the lead faculty/staff member and the Research Office for final implementation approval.